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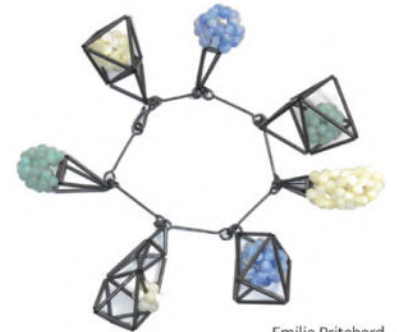
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Top to bottom, left to right: Kaffe Fassett (b. 1937),
Autumn Crosses, *Herringbone Stripe*, *Snowball Bouquets*,
Pastel Donut, *Diamond Jubilee*, *Hot Wheels*, *Log Cabin*
Sampler, *Bright Squares* (details). Kaffe Fassett Studio,
photographs by Dave Tolson.

JAMES A.
MICHENER





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THANK YOU, AMERICAN CRAFT COUNCIL MEMBERS

I want to extend a warm, heartfelt thank-you to all of our members. No other organization fosters craftsmanship the way we do – and your membership makes that possible. You support the artists who exhibit at our shows, you help influence the content in our magazine, and you strengthen our educational efforts by attending our enriching programs.

We are excited to add additional benefits to your membership in the year ahead. Not only are we planning more events for you in 2016, soon ACC members will have access to free webinars and discounts on online classes through the Maryland Institute College of Art.


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Letters

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Zoom

Woodworker Reed Hansuld's handsome furnishings and Vittrifiedstudio's spare ceramics. Plus: Curator Nora Atkinson on the Renwick's grand reopening; a community-minded mission at Gravers Lane Gallery; tasteful handmade goods for the kitchen; shows to see; new books, including Heath Ceramics' *Tile Makes the Room*; and readers answer: How do you explore craft at home?

038

Collective Unconscious

No matter how decorative or demure, our homes are protective spaces, safe places for renewal and retreat. Julie K. Hanus spots six artists exploring the idea of shelter.

On the cover

Daniel Hopper

The California blacksmith calls his style "abstracted realism."

Photo: Mark Tuschman

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RIGHT:

Granite Calimpong

Glint, 2014, glass, marble, gold leaf, 6 x 11.5 in. dia.

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Personal Paths

Anika Smulovitz doesn't consider herself especially devout, yet, as an artist, she is drawn again and again to Judaica. Laura Silver connects with the Boise, Idaho, metalsmith.

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Material Matters

Granite Calimpong worked with clay – until glass swept him off his feet. Danielle Maestretti talks to the Seattle artist.

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Traditions

Want one of Bob Kramer's handmade culinary knives? Get in line. Perry A. Price talks to the Olympia, Washington, artist – the recipient of this year's Rare Craft Fellowship Award.

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Wide World of Craft

Travelers flock to Puerto Rico for its abundant beaches, but in its capital, San Juan, culture is as rich as the landscape. Liz Logan takes us on a tour of the city.

096

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The studio craft movement was built on time-tested technique and hard-won skill. Now, some craft artists are deliberately breaking the rules. Liz Logan interviews Elaine Cheasley Paterson and Susan Surette, the editors of *Sloppy Craft*.

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Anton Alvarez's *Thread Wrapping Machine Chair* 090415.



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Always Unfolding

After decades in New York, fiber artist Kiyomi Iwata returned to Richmond, Virginia – and embarked on a new chapter in her career. Joyce Lovelace has the story.

056
The Sweet Spot

Art, functionality, and an affinity for the natural world meet in Daniel Hopper's metalwork. Deborah Bishop checks in with the Bay Area blacksmith.

064
Storehouse

Book artist Claire Van Vliet's archive is housed at the Library of Congress. She keeps her other trove – a stash of decorative and hand-made papers – at her Vermont home. Betty Bright pays a visit to the master maker.

072
Precious Mettle

Forget gold and precious gems. Iconoclastic jewelry artist Tara Locklear depends on skateboards and cement for her raw materials. Joyce Lovelace talks to the Raleigh, North Carolina, maker.

080
CRAFTED LIVES
Labor of Love

In upstate New York, potter Marvin Bjurlin and Christina Rausa, director of the region's Crafts Alliance, have made a modest bungalow uniquely theirs. Rebecca J. Ritzel calls on the creative couple.

“She’s kind of this new rock star ... one of those up-and-coming voices we hope will carry the movement forward.”

ROBERT EBENDORF
ON TARA LOCKLEAR



Tara Locklear
Rubble of Gems I, 2014,
broken skateboards,
maple, sterling silver,
pigment, 20 x 4 x 3 in.
page 072



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Sarah Nance, 2014-2015 Craft/Material Studies Fountainhead Fellow, Fiber



For book artist Claire Van Vliet (page 64), home means living with a lifetime's worth of treasured paper stock.

Welcome Home

ARTISTS, I'D ARGUE, ARE MORE particular about their homes than the average person. Again and again I've seen this, as I've interviewed artists where they live and helped shape our Crafted Lives stories, which offer a glimpse inside the dwellings of creative people.

An artist, generally speaking, won't settle for any random kitchen table. An artist won't abide bad carpeting. An artist won't affix some generic print to the wall and call it a day. Artists need to craft their surroundings, the spaces where they relax, refuel, socialize, and sleep, as much as they need to craft their work – and they will spend their last dime doing it.

Why should this be? Certainly artists, as a rule, are more visually sensitive than the guy on the street. They are more attuned to the look and feel of their environments; they see what's out of place, out of sync, and they are driven to fix it.

Yet the artist's compulsion to perfect her everyday surroundings may be more complicated than that. I realized as we put together this issue focused on craft at home. Artists may actually have a special need to feel comfortable in their concrete environments because they spend so much time in abstraction. They may crave familiarity, because they so often venture into uncharted territory. They may need to feel grounded as an antidote to flying high. They may need safety and comfort because their work involves a certain unacknowledged risk.

Degas spoke to the riskiness of being an artist. "A painter paints a picture with the same feeling as that with which a criminal commits a crime," he said. Making art is often experimental, precarious, uncertain, even scary. The danger of failure and loss is always present. A work of art is something you only hope to get away with.

My criminal experience is limited to a preteen shoplifting excursion in a Denver drugstore, but I remember what it felt like: terrifying, thrilling, electric. Time slowed down, and my anxiety shot up. What was going to happen? Would I get caught? Would I make it home?

I pulled it off. That's the way art feels, Degas might say, if you're doing it right. You squeak by. No wonder so many artists need to feel at home, at home. Disequilibrium cries out for stability. Anxiety needs relief.

Artists' homes, by and large, are carefully tended and idiosyncratic. Potter Marvin Bjurlin and his wife Christina Rausa have completely transformed their upstate New York home over the years; today it incorporates a two-story wall of teapots (page 80). Veteran book artist Claire Van Vliet lives among neatly stacked reams of treasured paper (page 64). "Home" to fiber artist Kiyomi Iwata means something broader:

a yearly trek to her Japanese homeland to soak up the sense of mystery and ritual so vital to her work (page 46).

The creative spirit is a fragile thing. One essential ingredient, clearly, is the experience of coming home.

MONICA MOSES
Editor in Chief

P.S. As you turn the pages of this issue, you may notice a new American Craft Council logo. (See, for example, page 4.) The logo is part of our plan to unify the Council's visual identity, bringing all of our programs – magazine, shows, awards, and educational offerings – under one umbrella. Look for the new logo on the cover of our February/March issue, along with a few other small changes in the magazine.

american craft

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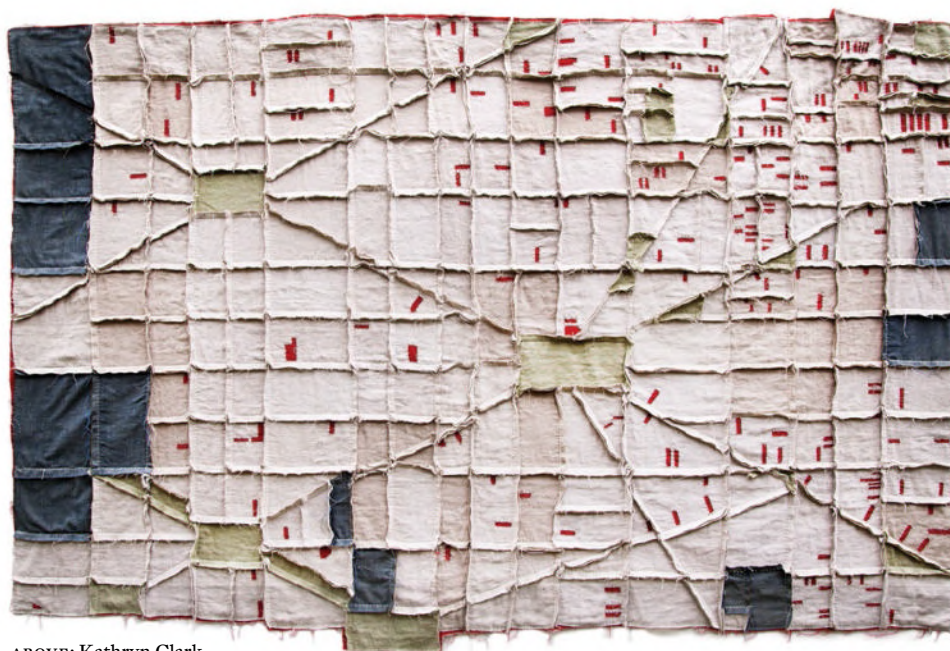
To The Editor



With Gratitude

My wife, Karen Judd, passed away on July 22, 2015, in peace at our home in Wisconsin. She had suffered for 10 years with a rare muscle disease.

We met in 1983 as I was just starting my furniture business, and I literally had receipts in a shoebox. Karen managed the business, and we traveled to art shows together. She worked for a property management firm as well. We joked that the art fairs were our “vacations,” as that was all we could afford. For the 1990 ACC Baltimore show we had our 4-month-old daughter, Ellen, with us. Our baby slept while we drove, and she was awake all night; but we (and our marriage) survived. Karen founded her own business in medical billing as a way to be a stay-at-home mom. I had the dream of opening a gallery as a storefront to the woodworking shop. In 1997 we opened Zazen Gallery, and she managed that business as well. She always put the needs of the family first and sacrificed dreams of her own. With her brilliant mind, she could have succeeded at any



ABOVE: Kathryn Clark uses quilts to illustrate the housing crisis. In this one, from our Aug./Sep. issue, red rectangles represent foreclosed lots.



RIGHT: Richard Judd: Artists’ work isn’t possible without the support of others.

profession, if life’s circumstances would have allowed. Karen had a bachelor’s degree in anthropology and psychology.

American Craft magazine has a history of honoring the lives of craft artists. I wish to honor those who are our support and who care for the family while we are on the road. They go unrecognized as we receive the attention and honors. They have contributed so much, and I am thankful.

~Richard Judd via email

Community Impact

Beautiful work to illustrate a terrible problem – [foreclosures,

“Reconstruction,” Aug./Sep.].

~Nicolette Tallmadge Designs via

What Constitutes an Artist?

This is a very challenging subject. I had a piece of art hanging over the desk of the president of the Maine Arts Commission and at the same time was rejected by a jury for the Maine Arts Commission. I always believed that because my “art” was painted art quilts, they thought I wasn’t an artist. But tell that to the president of the commission, who loved my art quilt hanging over his desk.

~Kimberly Becker via



For the Afghan Carpet Project, featured in our Aug./Sep. issue, six Los Angeles artists collaborated with Afghan weavers on the design of several limited-edition carpets. Proceeds were donated to Arzu Studio Hope, which seeks to empower Afghan women.

The Craft School Experience

What a great idea ["Five Fingers, One Hand," Aug./Sep.]. Bill May and the others at Arrowmont are an excellent group of people and employ a great group of instructors.

~Steve Brisco via

Well-Deserved

It's exciting to see Hilary Sanders ["Sum and Substance," Oct./Nov.] recognized by the American Craft Council for her technically and conceptually sophisticated work.

~Lisa Ellsworth via the website

Congrats to Duncan McClellan Glass on the story in *American Craft* magazine ["The Power of Art," Aug./Sep.].

~City of St. Petersburg, Florida, via

Such vibrant fiber art ["Two Threads," Aug./Sep.].

~Emily Smith via

I reread the article [on Crafthaus, "Peer Group," Aug./Sep.] this morning, and by lunchtime I was a member!

~Shana Kohnstamm via

Documenting Craft

That Afghan Carpet Project ["Shows to See," Aug./Sep.] has the makings of a great documentary.

~Carol Dannhauser via

Land o' Goshen

Beautiful! I dream of living in a town such as this ["Fertile Ground: Goshen, Indiana," Aug./Sep.], to just step outside my door and be surrounded by a community of craft.

~Daphne Lee via

I grew up in this area. I love that the ACC is recognizing the artisans who call this place home. It's a beautiful place, and I miss it. Thank you for bringing a little piece of my home to me!

~Camille Knutson via the website

Keep in Touch

We'll publish a cross section of your notes as space permits; they may be edited for length and clarity.



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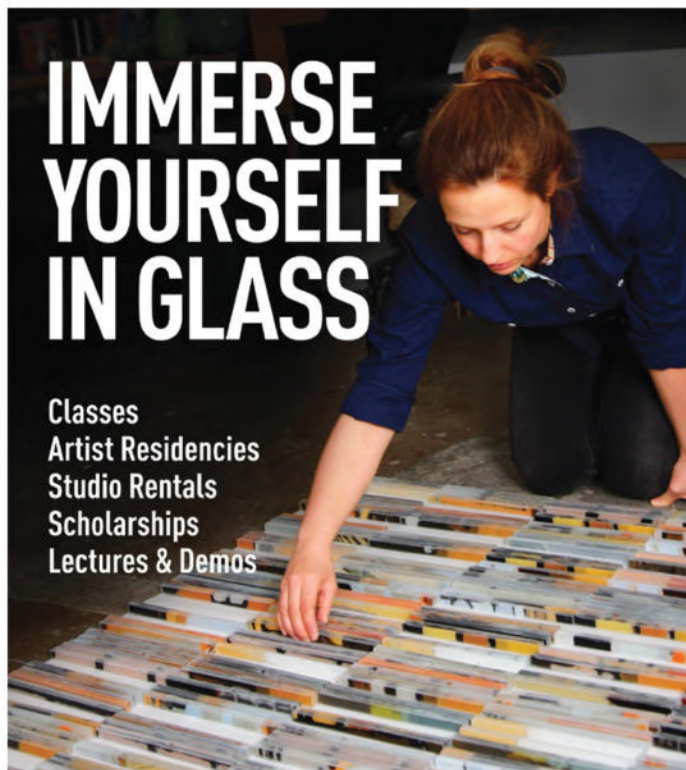
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craftcouncil.org/extras.

Diamond in the Rough

Innovative jeweler Tara Locklear (page 72) discusses how she makes old skateboards into fresh, new jewelry, in a video that picks up where our feature story leaves off.



◀ We caught up with Tara Locklear at an ACC show to talk about her artistic jewelry.



2015 Digital Bonus Issue

This fall's digital bonus issue is all about furniture. Browse a free copy online, or grab your tablet to catch up with Ariele Alasko, Colin Pezzano, Stephen Burks – and discover hot new chairs, fresh faces, and more.



↑ Master knifemaker Bob Kramer at work.

A Master Bladesmith

In *Traditions* (page 88), you'll meet the ACC's 2015 Rare Craft Fellowship Award winner, Bob Kramer, whose knifemaking skills caught the attention of judge Anthony Bourdain. As part of his fellowship, Kramer went to Scotland, where he collaborated with the craftspeople at The Balvenie distillery. We chatted with him to learn more about his visit.



The Renwick Returns

The Renwick Gallery has just reopened after a two-year renovation, presenting nine large-scale installations in a new exhibition, "Wonder." Andrew Ranallo has the scoop in a new blog post.

↑ The Renwick Gallery, open again.

Holiday Lookbook

It's the time of year when we round up the handmade items we'd like to give (and maybe receive) during the holiday season. Head online to see which ACC staff picks made the cut for our 2015 gift guide.



➔ Look for Daniel Michalik's 50/50 Bracelet in the *Holiday Lookbook*.

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"Love of beauty is taste.
The creation of beauty is art."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Zoom

A timely survey of shows, views, people, and work

On Our Radar Tried and True

Reed Hansuld and designer Joel Seigle launched **Harold**, a line of household goods and furniture, last year. It's named for their grandfathers, both Harolds.



REED HANSULD HAS SPENT nearly 20 years exploring wood. For a devoted craftsman, that's not an unusual figure until you factor in his age: 28. A rising star lucky enough to have found his vocation early, Hansuld began carving at 7 or 8. At 12, he built a wooden boat. "Finally, in high school, I had woodshop," he says. "The shop and music – I played the trumpet – were the only things I was attracted to."

These days Hansuld works out of a communal shop in Red Hook, Brooklyn, producing primarily commissioned studio furniture, as well as designing for production and tending to Harold, a line of household goods he and a partner launched in March. "Part of what makes this career interesting and enjoyable to me is that I can be utilizing the skill set I have in so many

different ways," Hansuld says. It's a constant juggle, but that's not a bad thing. "I think that's sort of what keeps me sane."

Not long ago, on the studio furniture side, Hansuld finished a valet chair – a customer request. "I offer a customer three designs," Hansuld explains, "knowing I'd be happy to produce any one of the three." In this case, the client wanted Hansuld's take on Hans Wegner's iconic 1950s valet chair. The finished piece incorporates all of the elements – a seat that folds open for draping trousers, a clothes hanger back for a jacket – but surprises, too. With an elegant kite-shaped back, Hansuld's walnut chair looks equally at home at a dining table as in a dressing room.

Hansuld grew up in Toronto; after completing a two-year woodworking program with a

production focus in Kitchener, Ontario, he went to work for Canadian designer-maker Michael Fortune, who introduced him to studio furniture. "I was 20," Hansuld says, "and I went out into the boondocks to work with Michael. His high expectations presumed a level of expertise I didn't quite have but wanted and worked hard to get."

Ten months later, in September 2008, Hansuld made his way to the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Rockport, Maine, one of the top US furniture schools. He spent nine months as a student, and another nine as a studio fellow – developing his aesthetic, building his portfolio, and taking on his earliest commissions. (Hansuld has since returned there to teach, one of the youngest instructors in the school's history.) In fall of 2010, armed with skills and experience, Hansuld returned to Toronto and began working full time in the studio.

Before long, his next step became apparent. "The majority of my work was heading to the United States," Hansuld recalls, and with New York the biggest designer-maker community in North America, it seemed "the natural destination." He relocated in 2013. Two years down the road, and with enough commissioned

work typically booked to carry him anywhere from three to 12 months, Hansuld still recognizes the challenge. "It can get hard," he says, "the economics of New York. Then I think: I'm in my 20s and living in one of the world's greatest cities. And the inspiration is everywhere. Sometimes you have to eat peanut butter while doing what's right."

Harold, the fledgling line of household products and furniture, is part of that effort. It began by chance. In November 2014, Hansuld moved in with a new roommate – designer Joel Seigle. They began creating items for their space, with no notion of selling them, until more and more people pushed them to produce on a larger scale. The company has come to give Hansuld a sense of balance – the opportunity to make high-quality goods he himself could afford and the chance to engage in a creative process completely different from his intensive studio furniture work.

"My place in the market will come from a growing, adaptive practice," Hansuld says. "I seem to have more options every day."
~PATRICK DOWNES

haroldharold.com
reedfurnituredesign.com
Patrick Downes' novel, Fell of Dark, was published in May.



Made of walnut with mortise-and-tenon construction, **Dining Chair No. 4** (2012) has a cantilevered seat upholstered in wool.



The seat of the **Valet Chair** (2015) is hinged to stand upright, creating a ledge for draping pants. Under the seat is a tray to store items emptied from pockets.

The seat of **Rocking Chair No. 2** (2012) is woven of monofilament (the same material as fishing line), with a surprising amount of “give,” so it can mold to the shape of the sitter.



However frustrating, however hard, the challenge of a new design is what drives Reed Hansuld.



Rocking Chair No. 1 (2014) seems almost to float, thanks to a steel frame under the walnut. And because it's cantilevered, the chair moves laterally as well as forward and back.



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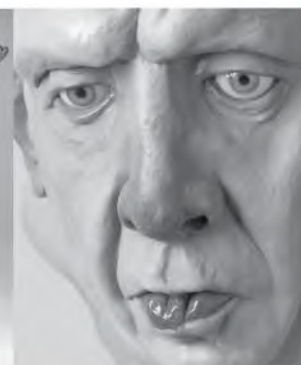
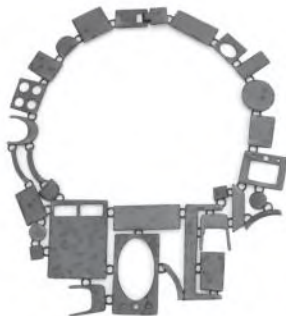


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Product Placement *Pure Form*

SHELLEY MARTIN CAME TO clay as an architecture student, in a course spotlighting structure and shape. It was the sole ceramics offering in her department, so after taking it several times for sheer pleasure, she decided to investigate a class in the school's art department.

"It was so different. I thought, 'What are you guys making? Why are you doing all this decorating?'" Martin recalls with a laugh.

What had drawn her to clay in the School of Architecture and Design at Virginia Tech was a different approach, one that captivated her and hasn't let go.

"We focused on the pure form, devoid of decoration," says Martin, who earned a bachelor's degree in architecture in 2001. "We were studying things like Greek vessels and ancient pottery. It's so reflective of my work now."

Martin, whose business is called Vitrifiedstudio, describes her home and kitchen stoneware and porcelain pieces as "minimal modern." Plates, vessels, bowls, mugs, and other functional items share basic designs, exacting lines, and subtle glazes, gently stating their presence rather than noisily declaring it.

Martin's transition from architect to ceramist began in earnest in 2011, a few years after she and her architect husband

moved from Brooklyn to Portland, Oregon, largely in search of more space.

"Ever since college, I had stayed in love with [clay] and identified as a potter, but in reality I didn't have the space or time to do it."

The couple renovated their garage to incorporate a ceramics studio, and she dove in. Even so, the architect didn't embrace ceramics full time until 2014.

"I was always afraid of losing my day job, because everybody said you can't make a living doing pottery," she says. "Even when the numbers went in favor of pottery, I was afraid of jumping in. Then I thought, 'Look, I'm already in.'"

Her aesthetic and a desire for efficient production techniques go hand in hand, she says. "When I design the pieces, I think of cohesion and efficiency, like I've created a language," she says. "It's important to me that everything stay in the same language, whether it's a cup, vase, or bowl. Not every pot I'm ever going to make will have the same language, but I want each line to have that consistency."

Martin has designed her work so that it doesn't need to be trimmed. She wants to minimize clay scraps, because wedging—kneading the clay to release air bubbles and prepare it for reuse—aggravates her tendinitis

and carpal tunnel syndrome. The scraps she does produce she gives to other artists.

Trimming is "one of those things people told me you have to do, but I wanted to make my own rules," she says. "I love straight lines from architecture. So with the design, I wanted to think of something I could throw and just take off the wheel."

She sells work online, through stores, and at art fairs. She also sells dinnerware sets directly to restaurants and, on her Etsy shop, sells her personalized cups, jars, and cremation urns.

Martin is glad customers connect with her spare style.

"There are a lot of people out there who, like me, love super-simple," she says. "They don't want extra decoration or adornment."

While much of Martin's work is on the smaller side, she loves the challenge of making larger objects, such as oversized bowls and vessels.

"I think that's from working in the scale of houses and big buildings," she says. "Smaller things are nice, but I also like 'big statement' pieces that influence the environment and change the room."

~DIANE DANIEL

vitrifiedstudio.com
Diane Daniel is a writer who splits her time between Florida and the Netherlands.



**Black matte
bottle-shaped vases,**
2012, stoneware





Turquoise tall cup pair,
2014, stoneware



Turquoise dinnerware set,
2015, stoneware



**Brown cylinder vase/
utensil holder, 2014,**
stoneware

Shelley Martin's minimalist forms are rooted in her architectural training and her interest in classical pottery.



Photos: Shelley Martin

Shows to See

View the complete calendar and submit events at craftcouncil.org/event-calendar.

CT / New Haven

Yale University Art Gallery

The Ceramic Presence in Modern Art: Selections from the Linda Leonard Schlenger Collection and the Yale University Art Gallery
to Jan. 3

artgallery.yale.edu

Ceramic artists such as Ruth Duckworth and Peter Voulkos have long been revered in the craft world but have been less familiar names in the wider universe of contemporary art. More than 80 objects from Linda Leonard Schlenger's stellar ceramics collection mingle with works by artists such as Isamu Noguchi and Willem de Kooning, giving all the pieces a new context.

GA / Atlanta

Signature Gallery

Same Old Guys, Same Old Stuff, Only Different: Ron Meyers, Ted Saupe & Sunkoo Yuh

Dec. 12 – Jan. 2

thesignatureshop.com

Ron Meyers' lively and gestural surfaces, Ted Saupe's intimate narratives, and Sunkoo Yuh's blend of the personal with the cultural and political: Three masters of clay demonstrate that working in their established styles leaves plenty of room for expression and innovation.

➤

Erin Marquez at Waikiki Parc Promenade Gallery



▲

Ted Saupe at Signature Gallery

HI / Honolulu

Waikiki Parc Promenade Gallery

Erin Marquez

Jan. 14 – Apr. 1

hawaii.edu/art/exhibitions+events/exhibitions

The Waikiki Parc Hotel has partnered with the University of Hawaii since 2013 to provide exhibition space for emerging artists associated with the school. Erin Marquez's six sculptures are inspired by the horses she grew up with on Oahu and those that come to her in her dreams, arriving, she says, "as messengers, bringing knowledge and guidance."

Courtesy of the artist



▲

Jessica Teckemeyer at Des Moines Art Center

➤

Gabriel Dawe at Newark Museum

© Kevin Todora



Stephen Petegorsky



IA / Des Moines

Des Moines Art Center

Iowa Artists 2015:

Jessica Teckemeyer

to Feb. 21

desmoinesartcenter.org

Where the wild things are in all of us is where Jessica Teckemeyer finds her unsettling subject matter. Mixed-media animals sculpted in vulnerable or surreal positions suggest the dark places in human experience where reason, primal emotion, and instinct slug it out.

LA / New Orleans

Newcomb Art Museum of Tulane

Andrea Dezsö: I Wonder

Jan. 20 – Apr. 10

newcombartmuseum.tulane.edu

Growing up in Romania under a brutal dictatorship, Andrea Dezsö found freedom within by letting her imagination rove. In her drawings, book art, glass, clay, installation, embroidery, papercutting, and other work, a sense of free-range curiosity pervades; superstitions and dreams feed the eerily beautiful worlds she creates, in which all things seem equally possible.

MA / Boston

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Crafted: Objects in Flux

to Jan. 10

mfa.org

Looking at the 50-some objects here, it isn't obvious that the accepted definition of craft once was something like "useful things made by hand." Each piece resembles traditional craft in medium, form, or concept. But each was made after that old definition cracked wide open after World War II, and the lines between art, design, and craft got fuzzy: a chair machine-wrapped in thread (page 104), a carpet whose design is digitally distorted, a ladle almost as tall as its user.



NJ / Newark

Newark Museum

The Shape of Light

to Jan. 10

newarkmuseum.org

Colored thread is Gabriel Dawe's main medium here, whether woven on a large scale into two gallery-dominating installations that seem to alter with the viewer's vantage point, or as the basis of garments Dawe transforms into surreal sculptural works that express clothing's influence on identity.

Urruty photo: Craig Hopkins / Maruyama photo: Courtesy of the artist

Marquez photo: Jordan Harrison / Saupe photo: Courtesy of Signature Gallery

←
Andrea Dezsö
at Newcomb
Art Museum of
Tulane



Artrider 2015

←
Ceramic
artist Syma at
CraftBrooklyn



↑
Wendy
Maruyama
at Houston
Center for
Contemporary
Craft

←
Carole
Loeffler
at Spartanburg
Art Museum

NY / New York City
Brooklyn Expo Center
CraftBrooklyn
Dec. 4 – 6
artrider.com

At this time of year, craft fairs bloom like poinsettias. This new one from Artrider is right in the heart of the Brooklyn artianscape, with 100 makers offering gift-wrappable wares.

NC / Raleigh
D.H. Hill Library Exhibit Gallery
**Life's Little Dramas:
The World of Puppets
and Illusions**
to Jan. 4
ncsu.edu/gregg/index.html
Artist John C. Henry's collection of puppets from around the world, a gift to the Gregg Museum of Art and Design (in temporary quarters here; new digs opening in 2017), stars in this display of 73 puppets, marionettes, and robots. Among them are Indonesian shadow puppets and the complete cast of a 19th-century *Punch and Judy* show.

PA / Pittsburgh
Society for Contemporary Craft
**Mindful: Exploring
Mental Health through Art**
to Mar. 12
contemporarycraft.org
Mental disorders have yet to completely cast off their stigma, despite their prevalence: Depression alone affects more than a quarter of adult Americans, according to the Centers for Disease Control. In 30 works by 14 artists working in fiber, glass, metal, clay, book arts, and mixed media, this show takes an unwavering look at the effects of mental illness on individuals and communities, and makes the case for art as a tool for awareness and healing.

SC / Spartanburg
Spartanburg Art Museum
**A Dyeing Art: Contemporary
Textiles and Fiber Arts**
to Jan. 14
spartanburgartmuseum.org
Nine fiber artists' sculptures, felt installations, quilted paintings, and other works pay homage to the history of the Spartanburg area, where cotton mills sprang up along local rivers after the Civil War and dominated the region's economy for the next century.

TX / Houston
Houston Center
for Contemporary Craft
**Wendy Maruyama:
The wildLIFE Project**
to Jan. 3
crafthouston.org

A trip to Kenya to meet with wildlife advocates inspired ACC Trustee Wendy Maruyama's life-size elephant "trophy heads" of wood, blown-glass tusks, and her altars based on Buddhist rituals to honor the dead. Together, the works make a passionate statement about poaching, the illegal ivory trade, and the tragic plight of elephants.

↑
Susie Ganch
at Museum
of Fine Arts,
Boston

→
Joël
Urruty
at Hickory
Museum
of Art

NC / Hickory
Hickory Museum of Art
**Interconnected: Tangible
Dualities by Joël Urruty**
to Feb. 28
hickoryart.org

In carved wood sculptures gilded with 23K gold leaf and in assemblages made of burned wood from discarded factory pallets, former furniture maker Joël Urruty bares his stripped-down aesthetic and devotion to form and line.

Sophia Jung-Am Park



→
Sophia Jung-
Am Park at
Society for
Contemporary
Craft

Inside Track In a New Light

NORA ATKINSON BEGAN AS the Lloyd Herman curator of craft at the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery in March 2014. But because the museum has been undergoing renovation for two years, she never worked in the Renwick space. Since her tenure began, Atkinson has been busily preparing for the July 2016 reinstallation of the permanent collection, an exhibition encompassing some 90 objects—without ready access to the objects or the space.

All of that changed on November 13, when the museum reopened, offering 21st-century infrastructure in a carefully restored 19th-century building. Drop ceilings are gone, replaced by long-concealed vaulted ceilings. Five windows have been uncovered, letting in more natural light. Energy efficiency and lighting have been upgraded throughout. An opening exhibition, “Wonder,” curated by Atkinson's colleague Nicholas R. Bell, presents large-scale site-specific installations by nine major contemporary artists.

Leading up to the big day, we asked Atkinson to tell us what she looks forward to in the renovated space and the reinstalled permanent collection.

How do you think the renovation will change your work?

It's going to be really fantastic to be working in the building. It's been kind of an exercise in imagination to put together shows for a space that I'm not so intimately familiar with. And we've really never seen the building this way. It's a major transformation.

*Nora Atkinson,
Lloyd Herman
curator of craft at
the Renwick
Gallery*

Do you have a favorite aspect of the renovation?

I think the thing that I'm most excited about is uncovering all the windows and seeing what kind of effect that's going to have on the galleries. I think it's going to look really grand.

I'm also excited about Nicholas' show, because I don't think the Renwick has ever done such massive installations that really take advantage of those spaces. It's going to be fun to see how people react to those.



Pieces by woodworker George Nakashima (1977) and ceramist Steven Young Lee (2014) will be on display in the reinstallation of the permanent collection of the Renwick.

*"We really wanted
to get away from
looking at things strictly
by medium or
strictly by period."*

How did you get started on the reinstallation?

I pitched a bunch of ideas, and the one that we went with stuck because we really wanted to get away from looking at things strictly by medium or strictly by period. We wanted to mix things up.

We have a lot of interesting pieces that are early 20th-century. And we have quite a lot of interesting newer work. And we just wanted to see all of those together to see how they bounce off of each other.

Your approach to putting the objects together has been inspired by the internet. Tell us about that.

The internet defines the way that we learn today. The way that we get online and we research something through hyperlinks – we basically go along with our own thoughts at the moment. We follow our own associations. We just move fluidly through the space. The idea behind the show is to provide a freer way of looking at things, to be able to jump from object to object and from idea to idea the way that we do on the internet, more fluidly than you would normally do in an exhibition.

How do you encourage people to jump from thing to thing the way you would on the internet?

That's the big challenge. When you walk in, there will be certain objects that have very obvious similarities. Some of them might be visually similar, and some might be connected in a more underlying way. The approach will be through a combination of visual cues and label cues – I think there will be entry points

for almost anyone. Most of the objects in the room tell layered, multiple stories. The people who visit will find their own way through the galleries.

Can you give an example of two objects associated in this reinstallation that people might not ordinarily think of as linked?

There's an Anni Albers piece, *Ancient Writing*, which I'm including in the show. And I'm including that next to a couple of pieces that I thought were really intriguing pieces that hark back to Anni's teaching in the Bauhaus school. There's an Erik and Martin Demaine paper sculpture, for example. The technique they use to fold paper was developed at the Bauhaus school; the first recorded sculptures like it were in one of Josef Albers' classes. That's an unusual connection.

What else guided you?

Diversity is really the key in every way to this exhibition. It's easy to bring together two pieces of glass by two different glass artists. It's more difficult to bring together a glass piece and a fiber piece from different eras. But I think those are the more challenging and interesting connections. There will be a lot of opportunities to find connections, even for people who've never seen craft.

How do you draw those people who've never seen craft?

Well, we have a brand-new museum. It's the perfect size for a short visit.

~MONICA MOSES

americanart.si.edu/renwick

Monica Moses is American Craft's editor in chief.

The poster features a large, stylized diamond shape in the center, composed of various metal craft objects including a paper sculpture, a glass ring, a ceramic bowl, and a metal leaf. The text is arranged around and within this shape. At the top, the title '2015 TAIWAN INTERNATIONAL METAL CRAFTS COMPETITION OVERSEA TRAVELING EXHIBITION' is written in a bold, sans-serif font. Below the diamond, the dates '2015 12/13-2016 3/13' are prominently displayed. The venue 'National Ornamental Metal Museum, TN, USA' is listed below the dates. At the bottom, logos for the organizing institutions are shown: the Ministry of Culture, the New Taipei City Government, the Gold Museum, and the Metal Museum.

2015 TAIWAN INTERNATIONAL METAL CRAFTS COMPETITION OVERSEA TRAVELING EXHIBITION

2015 12/13-2016 3/13

National Ornamental Metal Museum, TN, USA

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The Short List In Good Taste



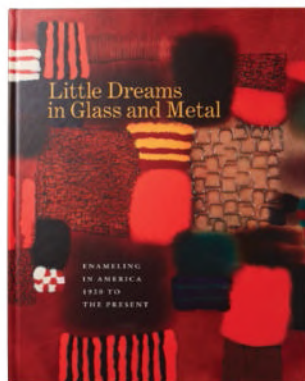
Tile Makes the Room:
Good Design from
Heath Ceramics
By Robin Petravac
and Catherine Bailey
Ten Speed Press, \$40

THE HUMBLE TILE HAS BEEN used as a material for thousands of years, but once you escape into the pages of *Tile Makes the Room*, you'll come to see and appreciate it with new eyes. Authors Robin Petravac and Catherine

Bailey became the co-owners of the storied Heath Ceramics in 2003. Their exploration of the material they love most starts with a host of gorgeous interior and architectural spaces that have inspired the duo – from São Paulo to Sausalito, from Sorrento to Sydney – and ends with a concise primer on the process of making and installing tile. Throughout, the book is

laced with their thoughtful commentary and considerations on design, along with examples of how tile can transform a space.

Here at the Craft Council, a colleague who picked up the book said she had to put it down because she was tempted to lick the luscious pages – and there may be no better endorsement than that. It is, simply put, delicious.
~ELIZABETH RYAN



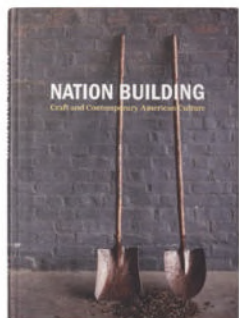
Little Dreams in Glass and Metal:
Enameling in America
1920 to the Present
By Bernard N. Jazzar
and Harold B. Nelson
University of North Carolina
Press, \$65

THERE IS SOMETHING BEWITCHING about enameling: the way that glass is fused to an opaque surface, resulting in haphazardly illuminated forms, often in the most vivid of colors. While this alluring technique has been part

of American artistic vernacular for nearly a century, it has been inexplicably underrepresented in the world of craft. Now, the Enamel Arts Foundation is shedding light on it in a big way with *Little Dreams in Glass and Metal*, an examination of the field, accompanying a 122-object exhibition of the same name. Featuring striking images of jewelry, objects, and sculptures, including several foldouts,

Little Dreams ranges from early masters of the medium, including Karl Drerup and June Schwarcz, to contemporary artists such as Jessica Calderwood and Andrew Kuebeck, who use the medium to explore sexuality, gender, and relationships. It is a gratifyingly comprehensive survey – with a bonus: More than half of the artists featured are women.

~JESSICA SHAYKETT



Nation Building:
Craft and Contemporary
American Culture
Edited by Nicholas R. Bell
Bloomsbury Academic, \$30

IN 2012, FOR ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY, the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery hosted a symposium; the essays in this volume of the same name are adaptations of papers presented. While the

book, admittedly, is a snapshot in time (preserved here is Glenn Adamson's piece "Goodbye Craft," composed before he became director of the Museum of Arts and Design), *Nation Building* nonetheless remains a diverse assembly of voices in craft scholarship, as well as perspectives the discipline has grown to include – from previously

unexamined critical histories of studio craft to a response to the still-escalating effects of digital fabrication. The intervening years have failed to diminish the consequence of this collection; *Nation Building* delivers on its promise to position craft scholarship within the whole of American culture.

~PERRY A. PRICE

Goods Kitchen Craft



▲ Charlotte Mei

With adorable wares such as this Toast plate, Charlotte Mei mines contemporary culture with a sense of wit and play. The London artist's most recent line of ceramics includes

tableware that can be customized with words and one-off illustrations, including Mei's interpretations of cult favorites such as *Star Wars* and *Adventure Time*. charlottemei.com



▲ Smith Shop

Smith Shop, a craft-centered metalworking studio near downtown Detroit, opened in 2012 with ambitious plans for the future of Motor City manufacturing. Owned by metalsmiths Gabriel Craig, Amy Weiks, and Adam Whitney, the studio's offerings range from architectural metalwork and jewelry to accessories such as the elegant serving ware shown here. smithshopdetroit.com

➤ Sarah Kersten

With these fermentation jars, Bay Area ceramist Sarah Kersten mixes clean lines with classic ingenuity. Each one is designed with a water seal, a feature that dates back centuries, which helps inhibit mold, discourage flies, and prevent funky odors from escaping. sarahkersten.com



▼ Hank by Henry

Allison Henry describes the chopsticks she designs with chef Edward Ross as "fancy little sticks of wood" – and they are as fabulous as they are functional.

The Portland, Oregon, duo's tiny treasures are made in pairs from untreated hardwood before being painted by hand. hankbyhenry.com



◀ Indigo and Snow

With these flour-sack tea towels, Indigo and Snow founder Annabella Sardelis shares something very intimate: a prayer of gratitude repeated daily at her own dinner table. The Minneapolis designer and textile artist adds visual interest by hand-printing each one with a sumi ink drawing. indigoandsnow.com

➤ Baigelman Glass

It's easy to mix artful objects and artisan booze with these cocktail glasses from Chicago's Baigelman Glass. The studio is helmed by Aaron Baigelman and his partner Heather Ahrens; Baigelman aims for his hot shop to serve not just as a business but also a place where emerging artists can comfortably hone their craft. baigelmanglass.com



Shop Talk Creative Commons

Gravers Lane Gallery
8405 Germantown Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19118
graverslanegallery.com
215-247-1603

IN AN ERA WHEN GALLERIES are moving online, realigning their efforts to focus on expos, or closing altogether, Gravers Lane Gallery, in Chestnut Hill on the northwest cusp of Philadelphia, is a bit of an anomaly. The gallery opened in 2011 as an offshoot of local developer Ken Goldenberg's real estate enterprise, the Goldenberg Group, and already, it has celebrated a few milestones – including a recent expansion and a renovation completed in mid-October.

Commercial success isn't the only thing that sets this gallery apart. Gravers Lane also operates, in many ways, like a nonprofit, with a community outreach strategy that includes exhibitions, partnerships, and support of organizations such as the youth-oriented Stained Glass Project.

At the helm of operations is Bruce D. Hoffman, an independent curator, artist, writer, and educator with nearly three decades of experience in the Philadelphia area as an advocate for the arts. We talked with Hoffman to learn more about how Gravers Lane marries doing well with doing good.

Ken Goldenberg's development group specializes in projects with a positive social impact. How does a retail gallery fit into the picture?

Community outreach and assistance – it's very dear to [Goldenberg]. And it was one of his ideas to have this gallery for the



community; it's another way of giving the community something.

When I met Goldenberg, one of the things I said to him was: I'm straightforward and transparent, and I do things my own way – and he loved it. He gave me carte blanche to build this gallery and make it something special. I've been working on that for over three years.

Why is the community aspect of Gravers Lane so important?

It's pivotal that small galleries stay in their community. Their doors are open, and people are allowed to walk in whether they have the means to purchase or not. It's a true educational facility for young artists – and a place to cultivate new collectors.

If you can't see something firsthand, it's not art anymore. Especially in the decorative art world, because everything is so visceral and tactile. You need to go in. You need to touch a pot. Do you know what I mean? A piece of jewelry you *need* to handle.

Ken Goldenberg (right) founded Gravers Lane to promote community access to art; through his People Helping People Foundation, he is also involved in community projects in Africa.

Gravers Lane represents a fair number of Philadelphia artists. Was it an intentional decision to promote local talent?

No, we represent a wide range of artists, internationally as well as locally. I have no bias toward region or age. I want to show the highest-quality, most innovative work possible, from production to one-of-a-kind, from monumental to miniature. But I'm not going to take something I don't have the market for. I don't think that's fair – to tie an artist up when you can't help them make a living. Because it's a win-win when you can sell the work.

Earlier this year you transformed a site next door to the gallery into a supplemental exhibition space. And then you decided to



As a student, director Bruce D. Hoffman felt unwelcome in galleries. He's made Gravers Lane a place anyone can come to see work by artists such as Orly Wexler (left) and Lindsay Ketterer Gates (below.)



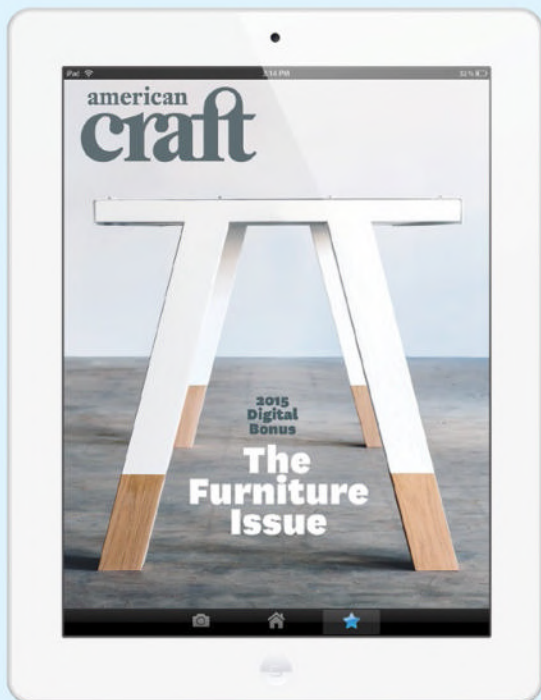
renovate the original gallery. What prompted these changes?

The idea is more space, more elegance, be able to show things better. [With the renovation], it's like when you buy a new shirt and [then realize] your pants don't look good. We realized our pants were a little tattered.

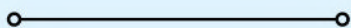
The old space used to be a musical theater store. It still had retrofitted, kind of '80s counters. We wanted to make it very sophisticated, cutting-edge, but still maintain a welcoming environment. There's nothing worse than walking up to a gallery and feeling uncomfortable about pulling the door open.

I think that goes back to my youth going into New York and feeling uncomfortable walking into a gallery, because they used to look at us like, "Art students, go away." And I'm quite the opposite. I want the students to come in. ~DAKOTA SEXTON

Dakota Sexton is American Craft's assistant editor.



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Voices

How do you explore craft at home?



I'VE LIVED IN rented bedrooms with other people's furniture, and it never, ever felt like home to me. It's so impersonal. But when you put in handmade objects and meaningful pieces to you, it brings a warmth to the room that otherwise just isn't there. One of the first things I do in a new place is put up my paintings. There is a painter named Fabio Napoleoni, and I have three or four of his pieces. And I've collected little things, too – hooks from different blacksmiths. It doesn't have to be about the big items.

~CARLEY EISENBERG, furniture maker, Providence, RI



FOR THE MOST PART, the design and quieter part of my wood-working practice all happen at home, outside of the studio. At my woodshop I make frames and figure out how things piece together. Then I bring the piece home to weave it. It's such an intimate experience. And a much quieter headspace. An object also reacts totally differently depending on where it is – even in an office versus a shop. If I'm working on a new design, I bring it home and live with it for at least a week. Otherwise I never experience that object in context. And I think living with these things is really important.

~KATE CASEY, designer-woodworker, Brooklyn



AS MY LOOM FITS IN my living room, I am fortunate to do the bulk of my looming right there, which is really convenient and wonderful. Often I weave in my pajamas. It is totally integrated in my life. And my neighbors are supportive. They get a kick out of it, because in the basement in the laundry room, the super put up old-fashioned drying lines for my scarves; it has become a de facto billboard for the new collections. Many a sale was made from wet pieces hanging there. Isn't that kind of neat?

~W. JOHN JAMESON III, weaver, Manhattan



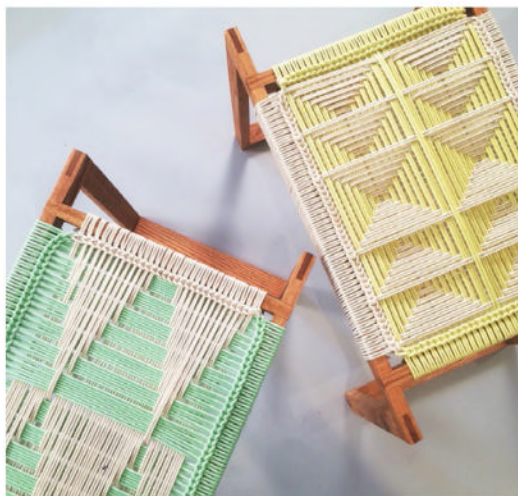
WE THINK CRAFT can be used as a word in general terms – when people talk about working with their hands. But we also look at it as a whole life. It's about how we do things: cooking, gardening, our home, and most importantly how we are hands-on with our children, which we think is a craft in itself. Through time, a craftsman becomes very efficient in his or her movements. There's no wasted time, no wasted effort. That type of movement is what we're trying to achieve with our own life, and our own business.

~ERIC AND LORI WRIGHT, designer-makers, North High Shoals, GA



I LIKE TO SURROUND myself with products that have meaning, that are either designed by friends or that I find beautiful. But I'm also a little bit younger, and I can't always afford what I want. So my boyfriend and I sometimes make our own furnishings. We bought an Ikea bed, and I wanted my own headboard, so I just cut off the headboard that was attached, and I took a super-old Indian room divider and attached that as my headboard. I also just created cork hanging planters, for my own house and as part of my line of home goods. And I trade with other artists – simple things like that.

~MELANIE ABRANTES, designer-maker, Oakland, CA



Brooklyn furniture maker Kate Casey's influences range from Danish cord weaving, macramé, and crochet to traditional Shaker and hand-joinery techniques.

2015

Holiday Gift Guide



Devta Doolan (earrings), Elena Rosenberg (hat, wrap, and gloves), Merrie Buchsbaum (pens), Boline Strand (ornaments), Arza Gilad (purse), Lucy Bergamini (vase)

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1



4



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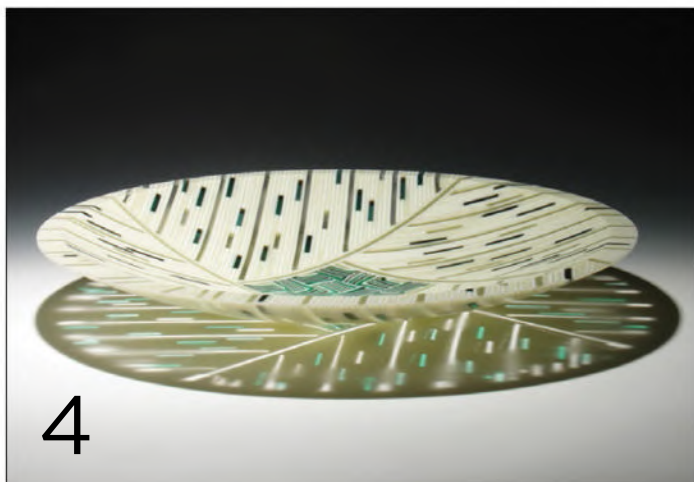
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Gimme Shelter

SPOTTED BY

Julie K. Hanus

We call our homes castles, we speak of feathering our nests. No matter how decorative or demure, our homes are protective spaces – safe places of renewal and retreat.

➤ Throughout her life, Kansas metalsmith **Heather Bayless** has been most at home outdoors. And her kinship with nature comes through in her silver Nest rings, necklaces, brooches, and hair-pins; this one is called *Taut Nest*.
heatherbayless.com

Heather Bayless (2)



▼ Butter and eggs, milk and bread. Sometimes, the hard-working pantry staples that anchor a home deserve their own special shelter – such as this neighborhood of earthenware Butter Houses, by Portland, Oregon, ceramist **Brian R. Jones**.
brianrjones.com



Brian R. Jones

▼ Brooklyn artist **Reineke Hollander** is captivated by textiles – how scraps of cloth evoke memories and carry stories – and uses them for her painterly assemblages. Her

commissionable Memorial Chairs stand in for the fabric of our lives, incorporating textile remnants that belonged to the person to whom the work is dedicated.

This pair, *Father & Mother*, includes fragments of textile objects – a knapsack, a passport cover, a silk handkerchief – that belonged to her own parents.
reinekehollander.com



Reineke Hollander

Courtesy of the artist



◀ Soothe a small one in this Rocker Cradle by **Scott Morrison**. Inspired by Sam Maloof, the Montana woodworker specializes in custom rocking chairs – and is a proponent of the motion's therapeutic, calming effect. finewoodworker.com

▼ **Christina Bothwell's** work channels our most vulnerable moments, articulating feelings we may not have known we had. In *Me and You and Everyone Else*, three figures of cast glass and clay – the Pennsylvania artist's signature combination – sit quietly inside a house; one cradles a small deer. Even sheltered, they are exposed; their inner lives are visible – to anyone who cares enough to look closely. christinabothwell.com



Dominic Episcopo

▲ Our fascination with wild children who have grown up separate from society goes back centuries. In Philadelphia artist **Judith Schaechter's** stained glass work

Feral Child, one such soul seems to have found a measure of comfort out in the cold – sheltered by the skin of a wolf, protected by a vibrant bolt of birds. judithschaechter.com



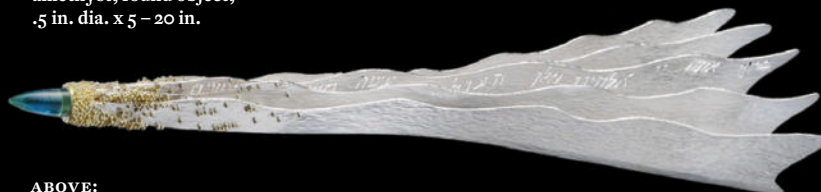
Robert Bender

Articles of Faith

Anika Smulovitz brings a scholar's eye to *Judaica*. STORY BY Laura Silver



ABOVE:
Untitled (extendable
Torah pointer),
2013, sterling silver,
amethyst, found object,
.5 in. dia. x 5–20 in.



ABOVE:
Mayim (Torah pointer),
2012, sterling silver,
18k gold, aquamarine,
2.25 x 10.25 x 1.1 in.



ABOVE:
In Honor of the
Matriarchs (Torah
pointer), 2012, sterling
silver, antique mother-
of-pearl buttons,
embroidery needles,
1.25 in. dia. x 10 in.

LEFT:
Myrtle Hadas
(spice box), 1997,
sterling silver,
24 x 11.5 x 6.5 in.

ANIKA SMULOVITZ MAKES exquisite, delicately fabricated works of *Judaica*, the ritual objects used for holy days, worship, and other Jewish observances. So it may come as a surprise that the metal artist doesn't consider herself especially devout—she grew up in laid-back Eugene, Oregon, in a progressive Jewish community that valued egalitarianism and the environment over ritual observance. But in her senior year of college, the death of her beloved childhood rabbi

inspired her to create a mourner's pendant. On the back of the pendant, she inscribed Psalm 23:4: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil for you are with me." Since then, Smulovitz, an art metals professor at Boise State University, has returned again and again to *Judaica*. These objects, she says, "hold the essence of Jewish life and culture," and she is drawn to their power, symbolism, and history.

Some of her works, like the pendant, which she considers a kind of amulet, are not religious objects at all, but have folkloric or traditional roots. Others do serve a religious purpose, but because the form of most *Judaica* is not governed by *halacha*, or Jewish law, Smulovitz has plenty of creative freedom.

She finds the Torah pointer, or *yad* (literally, "hand"), a particularly fascinating format, one that can be used to investigate any theme. When Jews chant from

the Torah at synagogue, they use a *yad*, often shaped in the form of a hand with a pointed index figure, to follow the words in the text and to protect the fragile parchment. Many of Smulovitz's *yads* allude to the natural world. Others are fashioned to look like scientific instruments—such as a telescope or magnifier—to help readers seek out, if only symbolically, the mysteries of their faith.

Nature is key to Smulovitz, but the scholar in her is always present. "I've got a lot of books,"

Hadas photo: Richard Gehrke / Other photos: Doug Yaple

Oak River (Torah crown), 2014, sterling silver, river rocks, opal, moonstones, ruby, emerald, 9 x 7.75 x 8 in.



she says with a laugh. “That’s usually where I start my Judaica. There’s a wealth of visual cultural history that exists in Judaism.” In researching spice boxes, for example, which are used during the *havdalah* ritual to mark the end of the Sabbath, she discovered that the oldest reference to the tradition speaks of smelling a branch of myrtle, and her *Myrtle Hadas* spice box pays homage to that detail.

When her Boise rabbi, Daniel Fink, commissioned her most

ambitious work of Judaica to date, the *Oak River* Torah crown, Smulovitz once again turned to her books. (A Torah crown, or *keter Torah*, is used to decorate the two wooden dowels around which the Torah parchment is scrolled.) She discovered that crowns were often embellished with architectural motifs related to the location of the synagogue. To express that sense of place yet preserve her focus on nature, Smulovitz incorporated river rocks into *Oak River*—“one is

from Boise, and the rest are from the rabbi’s hometown,” she says; Fink, a 12th-generation rabbi, often walked creekside in the woods behind his childhood home in Virginia with his father. The seven oak trees that circle the top of the *keter Torah* refer to those woods—and to the Torah itself, which is often referred to as the Tree of Life. *Oak River* speaks of nature, history, and symbolism all at once.

Torah crowns, like all Judaica, are taken out regularly and

used—and passed down through the generations. “That’s why I keep coming back to making Judaica,” Smulovitz says. “When an object is handled and used, it has the potential to pose questions or bring things to light or honor what needs to be honored.”

Does that mean she’s not finished exploring Judaica? “I don’t think I ever will be,” she says.

✦ anikasmulovitz.com
Laura Silver is a writer and editor in Minneapolis.

Part of the Process

Granite Calimpong had his hands in clay – until the hot shop called his name.

STORY BY

Danielle Maestretti



GROWING UP, GRANITE CALIM-
pong was surrounded by hand-
made objects. His father, a potter,
stocked the cupboards with his
own ceramic cups and plates, as
well as those by other artists, and
he filled the house with works
from fellow artists he knew.

“From a very young age,
I was very aware of the func-
tionality of things,” Calimpong,
32, says. Now an active member

of Seattle’s thriving glass scene,
Calimpong worked with clay
into his 20s and still returns
about once a year to Ferndale,
California – population 1,400 –
to assist his father in a semi-
annual kiln firing.

How did he turn to glass?
Even after a decade in the medi-
um, the way Calimpong talks
about the transition sounds
a lot like someone describing

the moment they met their
soul mate.

The setting is San Diego,
where Calimpong studied com-
puting in the arts at the Univer-
sity of California and worked
with ceramics on the side at
the UCSD Crafts Center. He
would frequently catch himself
watching the glass artists. “The
heat, and the event of it, really
reminded me of wood-firing,”

he says. His roommate began
taking glassblowing classes, and
when he brought home a beauti-
ful cup he’d made with the help
of an instructor, Calimpong
signed up. He was hooked.

After college, Calimpong
moved to Seattle. There, he
apprenticed with Benjamin
Moore, served as a poleturner
at Pilchuck Glass School, and
gradually began working with



FAR LEFT:
Tilty, 2014,
blown glass, stone,
Vitrolite, laminated
and coldworked,
13 x 11 in. dia.

LEFT:
Saltillo, 2014,
blown glass,
Vitrolite, laminated
and coldworked,
11 x 11 in. dia.

as many artists as he could, absorbing all they had to teach. Today, he balances paying gigs, mostly as a freelance glassblowing assistant for familiar names in the field – from Moore and Dan Dailey to Janusz Pozniak and Ethan Stern – with his own work. He creates in a space he shares with his wife, Jenny Wittlinger, a graphic designer and letterpress printer, and

three other makers, as the 5416 artist collective.

That “event” factor – the tight-knit team focused on a single goal, unable to step away until the work is finished – continues to inspire him. “There’s a certain amount of cooperation and teamwork that you really have to give yourself up to on a lot of big projects,” he says. “In clay, in the scale I was working

in, it can be a pretty solitary endeavor. In glass, for the most part, it’s a team effort – especially on a lot of the larger projects I end up working on in Seattle – and I really like that.”

All those years with clay do inform his work with glass, however, especially in the realms of proportion, form, and functionality. His sculptural works are minimalist and inventive, with

strong features and playful shapes that are often reminiscent of ceramics. He also makes goblets and glasses, which are classical in inspiration, but modern, too, in their restraint.

The cups are “not a very marketable item,” he admits, though he loves making them to use and give to friends. “The way I usually think about it is I’m studying form and proportion

Ebb, 2014,
blown and sheet
glass, laminated
and coldworked,
12 x 12 in. dia.



Solace, 2014,
blown and sheet
glass, laminated
and coldworked,
14.5 in. dia. x 4 in.



Glimmer, 2014,
blown glass, mirror,
copper leaf, marble,
laminated and engraved,
7 x 14 in. dia.



Mattole, 2014,
blown glass,
Vitrolite, laminated
and coldworked,
10 x 10 in. dia.



on a small scale” – on an every-day, functional level.

As in his childhood home, Calimpong and Wittlinger have filled their home with hand-made objects. Over the course of several years at Pilchuck, where he has been a student, a teaching assistant, an artist’s assistant, and, most recently, an instructor, he has traded his work for prints and paintings,

as well as glass and clay. The couple also has two sets of dinnerware made by a friend, ceramist Anderson Bailey, that they use every day. And they have a “really massive” collection of cups and bowls – large enough that they have to be deliberate about it, Calimpong says.

“Jenny and I always sort of gravitate toward certain bowls and cups,” he explains, “and

that is a lot of fun for us – we’re always using things and then talking about whether we like this one or we don’t.” New additions are used once or twice, and if an item isn’t loved, “it goes right back out, because we have a lot of stuff in there.”

One of his goals for the near future is to spend more time on his own work. “I don’t want to stop working for the other

artists I work for,” Calimpong says, which is easy to understand. “But I do want to try to find new ways to work with the material. That’s what always keeps me going back to the studio – always finding something new.”

✦
granitecalimpong.com
Danielle Maestretti, a frequent contributor to American Craft, lives in Oakland, California.



Chroma No. 2,
2015, blown
and solid glass,
coldworked,
8 x 11 x 11 in.

*Curiosity, creativity, and optimism
guide Kiyomi Iwata in the
evolution of her life and her art.*

STORY BY *Joyce Lovelace*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Robert Severi*

ALWAYS

FOR KIYOMI IWATA, WALKING through her retrospective show this past spring at the Visual Arts Center of Richmond was like seeing the story of her life unfold.

On display were the various dimensions of Iwata's art, 32 of the lyrical textile sculptures her sensitive hands have formed, stitched, woven, knotted, dyed, and painted over the years: ethereal containers made of silk

organza, metal mesh folded into bundles resembling exquisitely wrapped gifts, layered hangings encasing fragments of poetry lettered in gold leaf. There was new and different work, too, some of her most personal and experimental to date.

"Evolution is so much a part of life," she reflects. "That's what the creative process is about. There is never an ending."

As one of the leading lights of contemporary art in fiber, Iwata has had many shows, but this one was special, a homecoming. She'd lived in Richmond, Virginia, as a young wife and mother in the 1960s, just a few years after emigrating from Japan. It was there, at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, that she took her first batik dyeing class and became an artist. "It

was a perfect fit," she recalls of that life-changing experience. "I felt like, 'I'm going to do this for a long time.'"

In the early 1970s, Iwata and her family relocated to New York, where her creativity flourished. By the 1980s, her career had taken off – and would continue to thrive over the next three decades. Then in 2010, she and her husband,

When Kiyomi Iwata returned to Richmond, Virginia, after decades in New York, the transition opened up new directions in her work. *Auric Landing* (2015) is made of *kibiso*, a silk factory byproduct, and embellished with gold leaf.

UNFOLDING

at that point longtime empty nesters, decided to return to Richmond – a turn of events that, at first, disoriented her.

“When we moved from north to south, I assumed I’d pick up where I left off and everything would be fine,” she recalls. “But it wasn’t.” The place, naturally, had changed, and so had she. “You see life in a different way when you’re older. So it was



"I like to pull people in. I don't like to show everything. Many times viewers project their own mystery."



ABOVE:
Red Nova Three,
2009, silk organza,
39 x 29 x 5 in.

RIGHT:
Peach Three,
2003, silk organza,
20 x 14 x 9 in.



RIGHT:
Iwata, with works in progress. "There are many people who come to the studio and say, 'What's new?' I think, 'What do you think I am, some kind of production line?' " she says, laughing. But, she reflects, it's also "stimulating when someone is looking forward to what you're going to do next."

difficult at the beginning." Luckily, the move coincided with her embrace of a new way of working with a new material – *kibiso*.

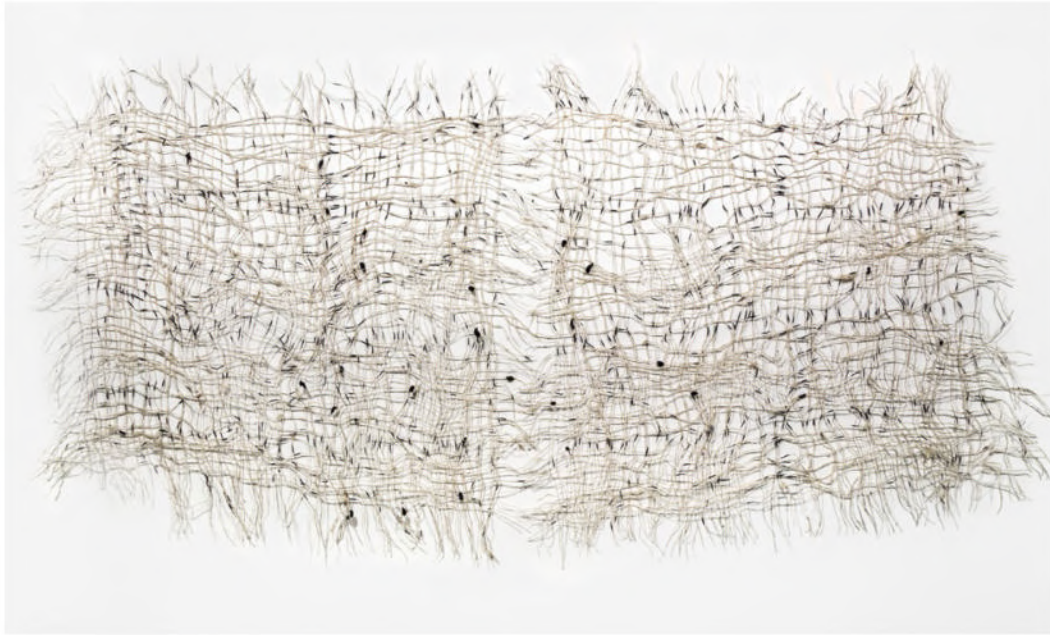
The first, coarse length of fiber spun by a silkworm before the thread turns fine, *kibiso* has typically been discarded at mills. In recent years, Reiko Sudo, co-founder of Nuno, an innovative Tokyo-based textile company, started salvaging *kibiso* and giving it to artists to experiment with. Iwata received her first batch on a visit to Japan in 2009, which she used in her container forms. Then, soon after her return to Richmond, she began working in a new way. Instead of shaping relatively solid surfaces (silk organza, metal mesh), she slowly and painstakingly wove the rough threads by hand into openwork wall hangings and sculptural forms. By the time the Visual Arts Center offered to host her retrospective, she was feeling inspired and energized. "I wanted to say, 'Here I am, back in town,' " she says of preparing for the show. "But I wanted to do it well."

"From Volume to Line" became the exhibition's title and theme, illustrating the artist's shift from her signature container forms to the newer *kibiso* pieces. The latter had special meaning for Iwata, who saw them as metaphors for the changes we go through in life, as well as, for her, a kind of therapy.

"It was quite symbolic," she says. "Kibiso is the very beginning of silk production. I had been using the other end, the fine end. I made a full circle." *Chrysalis Four* (2014), as its name and cocoon-like shapes suggest, pays homage to the silkworm and the things we leave behind; the Virginia Museum acquired it for its collection. In *Southern Crossing Three* (2014), a large, loose,



“Evolution is so much a part of life. That’s what the creative process is about. There is never an ending.”



TOP:
**Southern Crossing
Three**, 2014, kibiso,
rice paper, paint,
silkworm cocoons,
4.6 x 9 ft.

BOTTOM:
Chrysalis Four,
2014, kibiso,
2.1 x 4.6 x .6 ft.

RIGHT:
As demand for kibiso
has grown, Iwata
has begun working
with another silk fac-
tory cast-off – *ogarami
choshi*, the residue left
on the bobbin. Here,
a work in progress sits
in front of a drawing
of *Chrysalis Four*.

gridlike wall weaving, Iwata channeled feelings about leaving New York, about disruption and reconnection.

The gold-leafed wall work *Auric Landing* (2015) was the newest piece in the show, made as she was finally feeling at home again in Richmond: “I suddenly looked around, and I had a life here. I had landed.” The city is more sophisticated now, she says, “and yet it’s Richmond. There is a certain graciousness about living in the South, and that is charming. When I go to New York and see my New York friends, I adore them – there’s something crisp and neat about the way they operate. But my need is different now.”

In a way, she has always moved between different worlds – North and South, East and West, traditional and modern. Born in 1941, she grew up in Kobe, Japan, in a family she describes as “different.” Her father had been born in the United States, giving her dual citizenship. Her parents divorced when she was young, and Iwata’s mother became the breadwinner: “She always worked, was a very independent person, a little bit too Western for Japanese culture.”

Iwata came to America in 1961. “Japan after the war was very gray, and the United States was fantastically alluring. I said I wanted to study English, but that was just so I could leave.” Moving to Washington, DC, she soon met and married a young American man of Japanese descent, had two children, and settled in the US for good.

To this day, “I like to go home at least once a year, to touch base,” she says, referring to Japan. A conscious word choice? “Yes, it is. It is my home,” she affirms. She holds on to certain aspects of her native culture – the language, the beauty of ritual, “and also, how you perceive situations. There’s not so much





Iwata traces the shadow of a kibiso tapestry onto canvas. Her artmaking is fluid and free. "I'm totally open," she says. "And because I'm open, I can float. For me, that's an exciting process in itself."



As an artist, Iwata is endlessly positive: “Just when you think you’re at a dead end, something happens.”



ABOVE:
**Auric Fold with
Tanka Seven**,
2015, aluminum
mesh, gold leaf,
embroidery thread,
16 x 17 x 9 in.



OPPOSITE:
Iwata continues to
find satisfaction in
new experiments,
such as embellishing
sea grape leaves with
gold leaf – “for fun,”
she says.

LEFT:
Polarity Two,
2012, ogarami
choshi, silver leaf,
8.5 x 8 x 6.5 in.

direct communication – that’s more of a Western or maybe American quality,” Iwata says. “The Japanese way of thinking is softer, more of a go-around.” Maybe that’s why her work has an air of mystery, of secrets withheld. “I like to pull people in. I don’t like to show everything. Many times viewers project their own mystery, what is in themselves. I like that dialogue.” While her pieces have explicitly referenced Japanese traditions (*furoshiki* wrapping cloth, *tanka* poetry), they also look very contemporary; some critics consider them minimalist art. Iwata’s vision may be a synthesis of influences, but the expression is all her own.

So what’s next? Kibiso has grown so popular as an art material that Iwata is finding it increasingly hard to get. Lately she’s been exploring another castoff from the mill, *ogarami choshi*, the silk thread remaining on the bobbin at the end of production. She’s also been playing with the loose threads she gets from cleaning her kibiso, “the leftover of the leftover, very fine, almost like a spider web, but not as orderly. I’m excited about it.” A new direction, she trusts, will always come around. “Just when you think you’re at a dead end, something happens,” she says. “Because it has happened often enough in my life, I feel very optimistic, not only about my creative process, but about life. Something happens, and you say, ‘Oh! Of course!’

“That’s what keeps me going. I’m curious what will happen.”

+

kiyomiiwata.com

A catalogue of the exhibition “Kiyomi Iwata: From Volume to Line,” including an essay by Howard Risatti, is available from the Visual Arts Center of Richmond (visarts.org). Joyce Lovelace is American Craft’s contributing editor.





the
Art and functionality meet in the precisely envisioned work of Daniel Hopper.

SWEET

STORY BY *Deborah Bishop* PORTRAITS BY *Mark Tuschman*

spot

ANTLER FIREPLACE TOOLS

This fireplace set (above) exemplifies Hopper's view of blacksmithing: "the perfect combination of sexy and menacing."

"NO, I DON'T MAKE HORSE-shoes," proclaims Daniel Hopper, quashing any image of the village smithy, bellows in hand, planted before his glowing forge. Where some are drawn to the brawny side of smithing, Hopper arrived at his métier via pencil and paper – his background in illustration critical to his prowess as a manipulator of metal.

Detailed project drawings are pinned to the walls at Hopper's workshop and living quarters in a former brick factory in Port Costa, a tiny hamlet northeast of San Francisco. Scattered throughout are works in progress – a massive metal birdcage that encloses a seat, a railing of twisting vines, and, destined for a Napa Valley restaurant, a chandelier in the

shape of an octopus, from whose tentacles dangle blown-glass pendant lamps.

Now 43, Hopper grew up in southern Illinois and earned a degree in illustration from the Columbus College of Art and Design in Ohio. Graduating around the time that illustration was starting to be outsourced overseas, he joined a local animation company, working for three years on such productions as *Space Jam* before moving to San Francisco. Although he continued to animate for another few years, he knew his true calling lay elsewhere. "At first I was attracted to furniture design, seeing it as the perfect marriage of commerce and art," says Hopper, who came to

realize that while he was drawn to wood, the feeling wasn't mutual. "We had no patience for each other," he explains, "maybe because with wood there are too many stops and starts."

On a whim, Hopper attended an open house at the Crucible, the nonprofit industrial arts school in Oakland that offers courses in everything from glassblowing to enameling, neon, and fire performance. Volunteering at the studio in exchange for classes, he took workshops in welding, machining, ceramics – and blacksmithing. And although he was still animating by day, he knew he had found his ideal medium. "With forging, you start with these stock metal bars and breathe life into them. And

when you make a mistake, there are very few times you can't go back."

He volunteered for about 18 months, then worked at the Crucible in various capacities for a couple of years. Then he found a job with a metal fabricator. "There is something about cutting a piece down to 1/32nd of an inch to get you over the fear of doing very precision work," says Hopper. The experience also taught him that he preferred working with hot metal, which he finds both more forgiving and more organic. In forging, Hopper found the sweet spot where art and functionality meet. "I'm happy in this middle area, with all the skills of being a fine artist but



creating something you actually get to use. Commercial work used to be so beautiful, not mass-produced on an assembly line, but created with lots of care and labor. Over time it has become more and more diminished – cheaper, less valued, and less valuable – and I wanted to buck that. I wanted to make something solid, beautiful, long-lived – and where I could have complete control.”

Hopper applied his skills in drawing, metalwork, and forging to his first real commission in 2004: a pair of backyard barbecues. “My client envisioned some kind of plant form that would feel like part of the garden.” He ended up with an industrial version of a Venus flytrap, with three companion pitcher-plant tiki torches. The flytrap’s cavernous mouth was created by hammering metal over a form filled with sand, while the protruding trigger hairs were shaped from forged pipes (decorative, as well as handy for hanging utensils).

While Hopper’s style has evolved, the barbecues set the tone for how he has come to define his aesthetic. “To me, blacksmithing is the perfect combination of sexy and menacing. I want the work to provoke a response – for the viewer to be attracted and to want to touch, but also to feel a bit of trepidation. I resent work that is so dumbed-down and neutered that you don’t notice it.” When Hopper created a set of spiky votive candleholders to sit in the center of the large round tables at a well-known local restaurant, someone asked if it wasn’t rather dangerous. To which he replied, “Well,



VENUS FLYTRAP BBQ

This functional barbecue pair (top), Hopper’s “first real commission,” helped cement a link between his interest in hot metal and his expertise in illustration.

WALL OF PROTOTYPES

Some blacksmiths prefer to create in the heat of the moment. Hopper prefers to plan ahead, a process that, along with his sketches, may include prototypes at 25 percent scale (below).



only if you catapult yourself across the table.”

Whether it's fireplace tools with forged antler handles, a light sculpture incorporating metal branches and stretched rawhide, or a railing decorated with a deconstructed dandelion motif, Hopper refuses to be pinned to one idiom. “If I'm drawn to anything, it's to a kind of abstracted realism. Even a railing with tendrils and flowers, I need to push into a more graphic direction.” When a couple called seeking a very traditional vanity embellished with scrolls and collars, he happily referred them elsewhere. “There are blacksmiths who love to do that work – build the jigs, stand at the anvil, and copy a beautiful old design. I love art nouveau too, just in a different way.”

What all of Hopper's pieces share – from a spider chandelier to a suspended sea creature – is that everything about the design has been worked out in advance. Some blacksmiths describe creating in the heat of the moment, literally sketching in the fire. The idea makes Hopper shudder. “My creative process is anchored by my drafting skills. Back in art school, I was criticized for drawings that were too ‘illustrative’ and ‘literal’ – you know, not quite arty enough. Now that works to my advantage. I get pleasure from capturing the details and movement of a piece with incredibly precise drawings and then figuring out how to replicate that in metal. Plus, I think people want to see what they're paying for, not get some surprise reveal at the end.”

In 2006, Hopper created what has become his calling card (albeit one that weighs a few

WASP-NEST SCONCE

Operating an independent studio has given Hopper autonomy; for this wall sconce, a client had just one thing in mind: an abstracted wasp nest. “The design,” Hopper says, “was left up to me.”

Hopper's intricate sketches, once derided as “too literal,” now serve him well as he maps out his design concepts.



**TORNADO
CHANDELIER**

This piece began with a client who wanted to throw dinner parties lit only by the flickering light of a chandelier using oil lamps, not light bulbs. The chandelier houses 75 oil lamps, made with custom-blown glass.





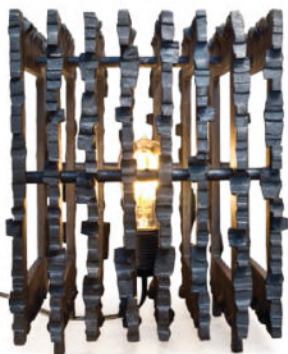


HOPPER'S SHOPMATES

The blacksmith with his Rhodesian ridgebacks, Bacon and Bourbon, whom he's had since moving his workshop and living space to Portola Costa, California.

KIKI LAMP

The metal frame of the *Kiki* lamp started life as a sample for a client's guard-rail project, the design of which ultimately went in a different direction.



hundred pounds), a chandelier to suspend over the table of a couple who eschewed electric lights in the dining room. Although entirely lit by 75 oil lamps, the *Tornado* chandelier's swirling vortex of sinuous metal bands is unmistakably modern.

Six years later, Hopper was showing his portfolio at Coup d'Etat, a San Francisco-based showroom of new and vintage furnishings, when owner Darin Geise spotted *Tornado* and asked if Hopper could create an electrified version in time for the upcoming Design Center Winter Market, a mere three months away. Hopper agreed, then immediately began scrambling to raise money for what became the Community Chandelier Project.

"At that time Kickstarter was getting big, but it seemed too impersonal, and I didn't want to have to start knocking out thank-you trinkets at the end." However, he liked the idea of the fixture being both community-funded and -owned. The couple who commissioned the original *Tornado* hosted

a fundraiser at their house, where their chandelier could serve as inspiration, and Hopper was able to secure about half the \$15,000 required for materials and studio assistants. In exchange, everyone who helped was given a voice in determining the lamp's final resting place, as long as it was accessible to the public.

"It's a monumental piece of art," says Geise of the second *Tornado*, which hung at Coup d'Etat for a year and a half before moving to a show of West Coast artists at the Museum of Craft and Design in San Francisco. "There are not many people creating these kinds of exceptional, soulful pieces in such a contemporary way."

To solicit ideas for a permanent home, Hopper put the word out on Facebook and was contacted by a few interested parties, including someone from Fort Mason, a former US Army post that today houses arts-related nonprofits and theaters. Hopper put it up for a vote, and today it hangs in the lobby of Fort Mason's Cowell Theater,

"right above the bar, so you can see it without buying a ticket."

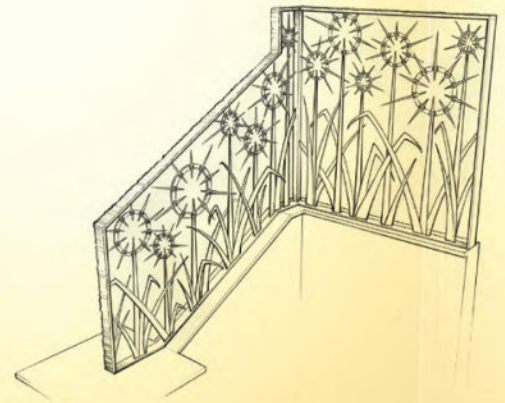
While much of Hopper's work is for private clients, one upcoming project will be viewed by thousands of people as they travel down Market Street, San Francisco's main thoroughfare, as part of a law mandating that a small percentage of construction costs on large-scale projects be spent on public art that can be viewed, for free, by anyone. Large resin globes with massive steel rings cascade down the face of an eight-story building, injecting it with life and interest.

And someday, if Hopper's wish comes true, he will have the opportunity to create a whole installation. "My dream is to outfit an entire environment – a restaurant, boutique, what have you – from floor to ceiling and everything in between. Because why can't something that's commercial and functional also be incredibly beautiful?"



danielhopper.com

Deborah Bishop is a writer and editor in San Francisco.



**DANDELION
RAILING**

Mixing ornamental
dandelion heads with
clean, simple stems,
this railing is an exam-
ple of Hopper's inter-
est in what he calls
"abstracted realism."



StoreHouse

Book artist Claire Van Vliet, surrounded by the papers and the landscape she loves, is always ready to create.

STORY BY *Betty Bright*

PORTRAITS BY *Irvin Serrano*







LEFT:
The Gospel of Mary, 2006, 11.5 x 10 in. closed; translated by Karen King, with commentary by Rosemary Radford Ruether

OVERLEAF:
Sixty years after founding Janus Press, Claire Van Vliet remains curious and passionate about her art.

ON A MORNING IN VERMONT'S Northeast Kingdom, Claire Van Vliet moves around her garden with a visitor, gathering tomatoes for lunch with quiet efficiency. In the 60th year of her celebrated Janus Press, the book artist works from a three-story home that overlooks sweeping fields and the distant Green Mountains. Van Vliet leads us into her cozy ground-floor space that holds the kitchen, eating area, and corner wood stove.

After lunch we gather upstairs in her studio before a stack of colorful books. Natural light fills the expansive space defined by clean white walls and wood floors. A Vandercook cylinder press, typesets, and worktables coexist with a desk and floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. A paper-making studio occupies a side room down some stairs, and a bindery inhabits the third floor.

Since she founded Janus Press in 1955, Van Vliet has produced more than 100 books. The Library of Congress holds her design archive; but another, living archive fills her house – a treasure trove of decorative and handmade papers that she uses when she creates her striking books.

Van Vliet acknowledges that her passion for paper is bounded only by the space available in her home. “I do admit to a vice besides chocolate and murder mysteries,” she says, “and that is buying materials. But I live out of the back of beyond, and it’s much easier to design things when you have all of these wonderful materials around you.” Later, we tour the three levels of her home as she points out where the different papers reside: in closets, under beds, in drawers, and on shelves.

Van Vliet is as knowledgeable about world history and local

politics as she is about the book-making that earned her a MacArthur “genius grant” in 1989. She describes her practice simply: “My inventiveness really is problem solving, because I do not think I am a person who has much fantasy. But I’m a good problem solver.” She is, in fact, a very good problem solver. Her ability to fuse artistry with exceptional craft has produced landmark works and elevated the artistic trajectory of paper.

Van Vliet opens *Aura* (1977), an accordion-fold book depicting the undulating horizon of the Green Mountains, with Hayden Carruth’s poem about twilight printed on the paper wrapper. Its six panels extend 4 feet, depicting a time-lapse transition from daytime’s vivid autumn colors on the left across to evening’s violet shadows on the right. To make it, she layered 12 pigmented paper

Circulus Sapientiae (Circle of Wisdom), 2001, 12 x 6 in. closed; slipcase and chemise by Judi Conant and Mary Richardson; text by Hildegard von Bingen, translated by W.R. Johnson

pulps onto the surface of a paper mold, in a process she developed with Kathryn and Howard Clark of Twinrocker Handmade Paper. *Aura* generated immediate buzz. Van Vliet’s paper-pulp painting created an image within the paper itself, rather than printed on its surface.

The arresting beauty of *Aura* conveys Van Vliet’s attachment to Vermont, where she has lived since 1966. In 1981 she moved into the home where she now works, amid forests, farmland,





Claire Van Vliet's passion for paper is bounded only by the available space in her home.

and dramatic cloudscape. Her affinity for the natural world was nurtured from her youth. Born in Ottawa in 1933, the daughter of a Canadian Air Force officer, Van Vliet spent summers with her family enjoying the wild beauty of the Lake of the Woods in northern Ontario. The death of her father, followed by her mother's death five years later, led to Van Vliet's relocation at 14 to stay with relatives in Southern California. Propelled by twin traits of intelligence and

resourcefulness, she graduated from high school at age 15, completed her undergraduate degree at San Diego State in three years, received her MFA from Claremont Graduate University in 1954, and founded Janus Press the following year. After college, she worked as a typographer in Germany and Philadelphia, and taught printmaking, typography, and drawing in Philadelphia and in Madison, Wisconsin. In addition to her artist's books, Van Vliet publishes prints, broadsides

(prints that incorporate typography), and pulp-painted paperworks.

To capture the voice of *Aunt Sallie's Lament* (1988), featuring verse by Margaret Kaufman, Van Vliet mined her paper reserves. In the poem, Sallie recalls a life pieced together much like the quilts she makes. Van Vliet—who has made a few quilts in her day—responded to the poem and the challenge of evoking its contrapuntal voice, which struck her as circular in nature. She chose a

**Tumbling Blocks for
Pris and Bruce, 1996,**
2.25 x 2.25 in. closed

BOTTOM RIGHT:
Paper in neat stacks
fills Van Vliet's house,
along with collections
of scraps, which she
can identify with
stunning accuracy.

RIGHT:
From Finland,
1997, 20 x 16 in.;
text by Judith
Haswell



*Without
mastery, an
artist's
work is "not
authentic;
it is an
act of will."*



concertina (multiple-folded) structure, but found her ultimate solution only when she set aside convention: "I turned [the binding] on its side, made it a diamond. And that solved the problem and allowed us to have the poem go in a full circle, showing how symmetrical the mutterances [the words at the corners] were." The finished book's papers differ in color, texture, and pattern, but like quilt pieces, cohere nicely.

Sallie's laments of failed love appear in the center of the irregularly shaped pages, punctuated by her rebukes ("Fool of a woman") in the outside corners. After Van Vliet pages through the book, she slips out the paper strip that acts as the book's spine and opens the book laterally. Now the poem

can be read in its entirety across the expanse of shaped pages, secure in its concertina binding of abaca paper. Van Vliet's woven and interlocking non-adhesive structures helped to fuel a widespread interest among bookmakers in lightweight yet durable bindings free from glue's potential deterioration.

In *Circulus Sapientiae* (*Circle of Wisdom*) (2001), Van Vliet published 12 songs by the medieval abbess Hildegard von Bingen. Here, paper takes flight in vibrant pop-ups – one suggests angel's wings – that rise theatrically from pulp-painted backgrounds, orchestrating the reader's engagement of von Bingen's sung poetry through eyes, hands, and heart.

Van Vliet can't seem to help herself around a cache of paper. *Aunt Sallie's Lament (Altered)* (2004), for example, was prompted by Chronicle Books' publication in 1993 of a mass-market edition of Van Vliet's original hand-printed book. Once the Chronicle Books version appeared, she bought 120 copies of it and went to work, producing a profusion of altered copies with dense interplays of color, depth, and form.

Her passion for paper has inspired her strategy of buying in bulk as opportunity allows, then storing her purchase until the right use emerges. "I'm addicted to paper," she admits cheerfully. When she learns about a paper mill about to close, she buys a large volume of paper and has never regretted it; closeout paper tends to be affordable. Some of it may not be in pristine condition. "But I can use it," she says, "because I often cut the papers up."



From Finland Imagine that I am showing you a small woven mat, 40 cm by 80 perhaps; made from long strips of rag, cut from old clothes and sheets and tablecloths; the less seams, of course, the better. The design has not been decided upon. It will depend on what I can find. I am a visitor here. I choose my materials primarily for their colour, weight and texture but, as a consequence, intertwine inadvertently other people's histories with mine: a little boy's shirt, a faded curtain, a sequined ball-gown. A garment that was worn for 5 years may be only given a line; a fleeting visit become a highlight. I buy a second-hand dress from the second-hand shop by the Orthodox monastery at Valamo, because of the place and the name and the blue and green of a hundred thousand lakes surrounded by spruce and fir. Mostly I choose dark colours. This is a Winter landscape waiting for snow. But there is wealth in the satin, velvet, damask; there is strength in the weave and tenderness in the well-worn cloth. I hold its softness against my cheek and feel the mystery of other places and other people's lives working with mine through time and memory to a new pattern. I carry my mat carefully; rolled between tissue in my suitcase, to hang on my wall back home.

Judith Haswell Copyright 1997 by Judith Haswell. One hundred copies were printed and woven at the Janus Press in Newark Vermont USA



Sixty years of stockpiling has resulted in a house that is figuratively built from paper; neatly stacked reams occupy nearly every room. Despite this plenitude assembled over decades, Van Vliet retains almost every paper's pedigree in her head. Reading *Aunt Sallie's Lament* generates a litany of stories. For example, she bought three papers in the book – India, Boxley, and India Office – in 1987 from Britain's Barcham Green mill. Van Vliet heard of the mill's closing while on vacation in England and took action. (She later produced a book chronicling the mill's lifespan.) She mentions three other "late, lamented" Fabriano cover papers, no longer available: "I used to have so

much of this paper that it was holding up my bed."

What has Claire Van Vliet learned in 60 years? Patience. She recounts the axiom that mastery requires 10,000 hours of practice. Without it, "the work will show it, because it's not authentic—it is an act of will." Her voice grows quiet. "The book, the work, makes itself known. You can't will it into existence. It will tell you when it's right."

"It's the whole Buddhist thing, although I'm not a Buddhist: When something becomes a right action, it feels right. You wait for wholeness."

✦
Betty Bright is an independent writer, curator, and historian who specializes in the book arts.

Irvin Serrano



Fletcher Manley





Irvin Serrano



TOP LEFT:
Aunt Sallie's Lament, 1988,
11.25 x 9.25 in. closed;
text by Margaret Kaufman

ABOVE:
Over the years, Van Vliet has published more than 100 artist's books – and created hundreds of drawings, broadsides, prints, and pulp paintings.

LEFT:
Aura, 1977,
12 x 48 in. open

FAR LEFT:
A wooden case of printers' spacing bars – known in the trade as leads and slugs – below a 1975 broadside by Van Vliet.

Precious Mettle



RIGHT:
Tara Locklear transforms spent skateboards into striking jewelry, such as the **Gem Collet necklace** (2015), part of her Pop Roxx collection. The scuffs and scratches are part of the material's character. "It's natural street graffiti," she says.

FAR RIGHT:
Locklear's Raleigh, North Carolina, home reflects her adventurous sense of style – plus her allegiance to tattoo and skateboard culture. With the artist are pals Leah and Roxanne.

*Forget gold and gems.
Tara Locklear's
materials
are on the fringe –
her jewelry,
on the cutting edge.*

STORY BY
Joyce Lovelace

PORTRAITS BY
Bruce DeBoer





ABOVE:
Laser Gem Cluster brooch, 2014, broken skateboards, maple, jet cubic zirconia, sterling silver, pigment, 5 x 4 x .25 in.



Pop Roxx Gem Flat dangles, 2015, broken skateboards, sterling silver, stainless steel, 3 x .75 x .4 in. each



LEFT:
FloRoxx Cluster earrings, 2014, broken skateboards, maple, sterling silver, pigment, 3 x 1 x .25 in. each



Laser Studded flats, 2015, maple, glass, plastic, sterling silver, stainless steel, .75 x .25 x .5 in. each

THE SKATEBOARDERS WHO hang out at the Backdoor Skate Shop in Greenville, North Carolina, all know Tara Locklear. If they don't know her name, they know what she does, which is turn fragments of skateboard into audacious jewelry: brooches and necklaces and earrings and bracelets that radiate the free-spirited soulfulness and in-your-face attitude of skater life.

So they give her their spent or broken boards to use for her raw material. Maybe it's the first board they ever owned, the one they were riding when they won that competition, or one they covered with angry, nihilistic scrawls at a painful time. More than a piece of sports gear or a means of transportation,

these are deeply personal items. Locklear gets that, and it's why the skaters entrust these precious objects to her, to break up and compose into unique sculptural adornments. Just do something cool with it, they'll say.

"A board holds so much history for each individual rider," says the artist, who now lives and works in Raleigh. "They can tell you the time and place they first bought it, why the graphic is special to them. It's part of their history, like your grandmother's ring, or your mother's gold chain, or your father's cuff link."

Seven layers of maple make up a skateboard, which typically is black on top where the rider stands, with screen-printed or sometimes handpainted decoration on the underside. Over its lifetime a board will collect scuffs, dents, and scratches, which to Locklear represent layers of memory and meaning.

"When skaters are riding on a ramp or sidewalk, or over a bench, or they're kicking flips down to the end of the street, that surface is getting marked up, which creates this history," she says. As beautiful as many of the original graphic designs are, she adds, the marks give them a singular character. "You couldn't replicate it by hand if you tried. It's natural street graffiti, all by the way they ride that board. That's the only way it's going to happen. And it is stunningly cool."

"Street" maybe best describes Locklear's jewelry, in more ways than one. Cement, the stuff of pavements, is her other favorite material (it's surprisingly lightweight), and she often combines it with skateboard – a natural

pairing. Using traditional jewelry methods such as casting, metal fabrication, and enameling, she gives all manner of non-precious materials (steel, cubic zirconia, glass bits) the precious treatment, transforming them into luxury items. She also uses exotic hardwoods with the skateboards "to tell a color story or combine textures."

One of her inspirations is the cheap but inventive and "amazingly well-engineered" costume jewelry of the 1940s and '50s. Another is the flash and grandeur of hip-hop music videos of the 1980s and '90s, starring the likes of Missy Elliott, Monie Love, and Eric B. and Rakim. "It had such power," she says of their over-the-top, bling'ed-out style. "Queen Latifah always



**Pop Roxx
Gem bangles,**
2015, broken
skateboards



**Pop Roxx
Gem Arc hoops,**
2015, broken skate-
boards, sterling
silver, pigment,
3 x 1.75 x .25 in. each

had this vibrant, colorful, fun, political presence – like, *bam!*”

Locklear is 43 but seems younger – and not just because of her tattoos and playfully edgy fashion sense, which tends toward loose, modern cuts, funky shoes, and of course, rad jewelry. There’s a youthful energy and enthusiasm about her, especially when she talks about materials and making, passions that only recently became her full-time occupation after years working in the corporate world. As she puts it, “I’m constantly saying I found joy later in life.”

Not that her childhood wasn’t, as she says, “great and normal.” The daughter of a machinist and a schoolteacher, Locklear grew up in Fayetteville, North

Carolina, and is a member of the Lumbee Native American tribe. Her huge extended family of aunts, uncles, and cousins would get together several times a week – for supper on Wednesday, go-kart racing at the dirt track on Saturday night, and dinner on Sunday after church.

Every summer, Locklear would spend two weeks on her grandparents’ farm, gathering eggs, shelling peas, and tying tobacco bundles, among other chores. She became keenly attuned to the way things looked and felt, like how corn silk had to be a certain color for the corn to be ripe. (Now, as an artist, “I’m constantly looking at those little nuances of material,” she says.) In the kitchen, she learned tactile sensitivity

by cooking with her grandmother, who was partially blind. “She’d say, ‘Tara, this doesn’t feel right, you have to knead that dough a little more.’ Her recipes were a handful of this, a fingerful of that. It was all about a sense of touch.”

At home, she picked up similar cues from her father, a builder and fixer. “He did everything with his hands,” she says. “I’d watch my dad feel around to where the bolts were, to know exactly which one he had to unscrew to change the

BELOW:
Locklear at work in her studio, in the townhouse she shares with her husband and dogs. When skateboarders bring her their broken gear, “I’m so inspired every time,” she says. “It’s like Christmas, every single time.”

oil.” She liked hanging out with him in his backyard workshop. “He’d hand me a hammer, some nails, and wood, and be like, entertain yourself. I’d make a stool or a lamp.”

After high school, Locklear attended East Carolina University, in Greenville, but left after 18 months. From waiting tables, she worked her way up to management positions with several corporations in the hospitality industry. She blossomed as an event planner and loved creating an experience through a visual aesthetic, with candles, flowers, and color. She enjoyed thinking outside the box: Instead of a banquet hall, why not a boat cruise, with a chef and fine wines? “I was never afraid to push boundaries,” she says. “My job was to



TOP:
**Concrete Costume
Cluster bangle**,
2011, cement, gold
leaf, sterling silver,
mild steel,
1.25 x 4.25 in. dia.

MIDDLE:
**Urban Archetype
Study V necklace**, 2013,
broken skateboards,
poplar, sterling silver,
pigment, 24 x 10 x 1 in.

BOTTOM:
**Iconic Interpretation
brooch**, 2011, cement,
sterling silver, found
faceted glass, gold leaf,
5 x 4 x .5 in.



make things happen. I loved bringing a vision to life.”

After more than a decade, though, she was no longer happy in a corporate environment. So she quit and re-enrolled at East Carolina University in the School of Art and Design, intent on pursuing some sort of design career, ideally one that involved handwork. Jewelry clicked for her. “I started cutting metal and making cool things. It opened up something inside of me.”

In her 30s by then and eager to experiment, Locklear quickly established herself as that student who always wanted to try something different. It was in a jewelry class that she first got the urge to cast cement in a mold. “I thought, if you can cast metal, what else

can you cast in a liquid form? That’s where my brain goes.”

One of her professors was Robert Ebendorf, a neighbor she’d known casually, unaware of his renown as a metalsmith and jeweler. (“I had no idea. I remember going home and looking Bob up on the internet and being blown away.”)

“Tara was a wild card, very forward-thinking,” Ebendorf recalls. “She had this spark, an insightful curiosity about material culture. Whether it was wood or wire or feathers or sparkles, she would think how to creatively bring an idea into form.”

Her early work was “bold and loud,” Locklear says, expressions of her lingering disillusionment with corporate culture. “It became my therapy,

Making a Gem Arc necklace, Locklear drills holes in a skateboard piece for a leather cord and clasp.



"I'm not really known for making subtle jewelry, and I'm OK with that."

Unbridled Royalty,
2010, sterling silver,
cement, found faceted
glass, 24 x 8 x .5 in.

"This was a real pivotal piece in my career," Locklear says, "the first conversation and display of my idea of what jewelry is and can be." It's also the piece that got her into engineering, mapping how a piece moves as a whole.



for understanding why I was so angry.” While in school, she started getting tattoos, and, to pay the bills, took a job managing a tattoo parlor. A few doors down was the skate shop, whose denizens regularly mixed with the tattoo crowd. “I was discovering this world and community of people outside of the corporate norm,” she says, and she liked it. In the skater underground, she found a metaphor for freedom and nonconformity – and a breakthrough for her art. “It resonated with a lot of ways I felt about jewelry. Instead of using a diamond or ruby or sapphire, I could make the biggest faceted skateboard gem and set it on a ring.”

While she’s feeling pretty content these days, Locklear continues to push herself creatively. For a recent show at Reinstein/Ross exploring the crossover of street art and art jewelry, Locklear collaborated with Vexta, a self-taught artist from Australia. After photo-transferring Vexta’s paintings onto enameled steel plates, they paired them with Locklear’s skateboard pieces and designs to create bold earrings, brooches, and neckpieces.

When not in her studio at the townhouse she shares with her husband and their two dogs, Locklear is often out in the field, taking part in professional

“I’m always trying to tell a good color story. Color is fun. Color is power. Color is difference.”

FAR LEFT:
Rubble of Gems ring, 2014, broken skateboards, sterling silver, pigment, size 7 ring, 1.5 x 2 x .75 in.

LEFT:
Pop Roxx Gem Pendant chains, 2015, broken skateboards, sterling silver, cubic zirconia, 28 in. chain, 3 x 2 x .25 in. each

BOTTOM:
Urban Archetype Study VIII necklace, 2013, broken skateboards, purpleheart, agates, sterling silver, 28 x 5 x 1 in.

RIGHT:
The convertible **Urban Archetype Study XII brooch necklace** (2015) can be worn three ways.



events such as the Society of North American Goldsmiths conference and American Craft Council shows. Ever the organizer, she has co-curated several group shows, among them 2013's well-received "Monochrome Noir" at the San Francisco gallery Velvet da Vinci.

"Tara is excited to bring everybody into the spotlight," observes Ebendorf, who is glad to see her using her considerable charisma and people skills to promote art jewelry. "She's kind of this new rock star, giving service to our field, one of those up-and-coming voices we hope will carry the movement forward," he says. "She's fresh, and she's a leader." For Locklear, engaging with fellow makers is not only fun, it's essential. "You're part of this beautiful community of fine craft that is more far-reaching than just the object you make."

If her work shows us anything, it's that jewelry can be unorthodox and still valuable, street yet glamorous. Skateboards, a girl's new best friend?

"You don't have to wear Harry Winston, even though Harry Winston is beautiful," Locklear says. "There is another option, for that person who wants to say something different."

+

taralocklear.com

"My material choices allow me the size without the weight," Locklear notes. "That's another reason why material investigation is important for me: How big can I go, how light can I get? How powerful can it be, or how subtle?"







Marvin Bjurlin and Christina Rausa's dining room showcases teapots by Bjurlin's students as well as by masters.

Crafted Lives

Labor of Love

An accomplished potter and a craft show director have surrounded themselves with works by people they care about.

INTERVIEW BY *Rebecca J. Ritzel*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Sean Shanahan*

MARVIN BJURLIN AND CHRISTINA RAUSA have differed on what to call the color of their house; they finally settled on what Bjurlin describes as “a warm gray.” It’s one of the few artistic divisions between the couple, however, and craft clearly unites them: He’s a veteran potter, she’s the executive director of western New York’s Crafts Alliance. Even their wedding celebrated their shared passion: It took place in early 2010 at Teotitlán del Valle, the famous weaving village in Oaxaca, Mexico.

At home in the States, Bjurlin and Rausa live in a small, 108-year-old bungalow on a quiet street, with a backyard that abuts SUNY Fredonia, a small state university about 45 miles southwest of Buffalo. Bjurlin bought the house in 1970; he had arrived in Fredonia two years earlier, freshly minted MFA in hand, to fill in during a faculty member’s four-month maternity leave.

He ended up staying for nearly four decades. Bjurlin liked teaching, and the steady job afforded him a chance to pursue pottery without having to worry about selling it – at least not every weekend.

Bjurlin bought the house in 1970 for \$15,000;



LEFT: Bjurlin's studio adjoins an organic vegetable garden. The "fish pole" in the foreground is a favorite spot for warblers to nest.

OPPOSITE: A tiled *torii* stands over the path to the garden. The traditional Japanese gate is common at Shinto shrines, where it marks the transition into sacred space.



LEFT: In her kitchen, Rausa cans produce from the garden. This year's crop included heirloom peppers, eggplants, and tomatoes.

OPPOSITE: Bjurlin in the studio showroom he uses to display his slab-built terra-cotta sculptures – fish heads are a common motif – along with a selection of tableware.

Yet because Fredonia was only a day's drive from New York and Boston, and a couple of hours from Toronto, he could easily travel to major shows and galleries. "Even though it's a little town you've never heard of," Bjurlin says, "it was a wonderful place." Earlier in his career, he was best known for making large-scale thrown vessels. These days, his focus is on slab-built terra-cotta sculptures with a marine theme, which he fires at an off-site wood kiln he shares with other potters. Many are fish heads, which can be hung anywhere; one of the earliest he made still greets visitors by the door to his converted-garage studio, like cheeky faux taxidermy.

The house itself has undergone many renovations over the years. The property is a quarter of an acre, enough space for his extensive organic garden; this year it included an array of crops, such as heirloom peppers, eggplants, and tomatoes. *American Craft* visited Bjurlin and Rausa to see their home, filled with his students' creations, pottery collected from around the world, and works that represent other artists who exhibit at the Crafts Alliance shows, held twice each summer on the grounds of the Chautauqua Institution.

How has the house evolved?

Marvin Bjurlin: I bought this house for \$15,000, and I've continued working on it ever since. What you see is a labor of love – tweaking, modifying, and designing. The house has almost no resemblance to what it was.

Is "arts and crafts bungalow" still a good description?

Bjurlin: Yes. When I bought it, it was bare rafters upstairs. Now it's the master suite, with an outside deck and features that are unique [including a sauna, a nod to Bjurlin's Swedish forebears].

he's been working on it ever since.



The foyer area houses a collection of masks.

Bjurlin: They're from Mexico, where I've traveled quite a bit. When I first lived here, I designed a Mexican kitchen, with orange and green and so forth. My dad and I built all the cabinets. He would come out from Minnesota, and we'd just tear into the house. [That original kitchen has since become a second kitchen devoted to canning.] When we renovated the downstairs bathroom last year, I found beams with his writing on it. The bathroom is the newest renovation; that was just last winter. I wanted to contemporize it.

The art and furniture in the living room area appear to be mostly Asian or Asian-inspired.

Bjurlin: A lot of what you see is Chinese because, although more



Bjurlin designed the kitchen,



ABOVE: In the couple's kitchen dining area, table settings by Bjurlin rest on a table by John Sterling. The collection of ceramics in the background includes work by Julie Crosby, Fred Herbst, Tony Clennell, Ron Meyers, Cary Joseph, and Lindsay Oesterritter.

RIGHT: Another view of the dining area, featuring a cabinet by Scott Sober and a tall chair by Joseph Graham.



and all of the woodwork is by Crafts Alliance artists.

recently I've traveled to Mexico, I've also traveled many times to mainland China. That platter on the wall – I duct-taped it to the back of my backpack. It rode in buses and cars and trains.

Christina Rausa: It's a reproduction, made at Fuping Pottery Art Village.

And what is the story about the two-story wall covered with shelves and shelves of teapots?

Bjurlin: The thing about teapots is that they can be absolutely functional. Here's a Warren MacKenzie, just designed to brew tea. That might be close to the most famous piece I own. There's also a Ken Ferguson and a John Glick. There are a few others by people who feature in the middle echelon of the clay world, but most of the rest are made by students. The point was that with a teapot, you could do [something traditional] or you could do something that is totally nonfunctional. With my students, I had a deal that they would make a teapot to add to my collection that was in the spirit of their work as undergraduates.

I would also give "teapot talks." I'd have students come over to the house and ask them to pick a teapot. I would use it as a teaching tool, and talk about the technique and aesthetic and timing and the geography involved. It was my way of engaging students.

You've also collected functional works in your kitchen.

Bjurlin: This is the Tina kitchen. When we renovated it, we tried to make it really something special and really user-friendly.

Rausa: A good kitchen is imperative to my existence. I call it my 360-degree kitchen, because I can pretty much do everything by pivoting. Marv did the design, but all the woodwork is by Crafts Alliance



Bjurlin came across these folk masks and ceramic pieces in his extensive travels in Mexico, primarily Oaxaca.

Their everyday tableware is Bjurlin's garden pattern; work by friends who wood-fire fill the shelves.



ABOVE: Bjurlin discovered the table shown here while traveling in China. It holds a selection of his friend Ron Meyers' vessels.

RIGHT: Additional pieces collected in Asia: folk pottery, brushes, and a small Tibetan painted cabinet.

OPPOSITE: The couple's jug collection includes two pieces by Tony Clennell, a friend who fires with Bjurlin at a shared kiln.



artists. John Sterling designed and built the table and chairs out of sycamore, cherry, and walnut. Joe Flikkema built the window table and shelves and our countertops, and Scott Sober designed our sideboard and built it out of wood from our neighbor's barn, along with a curly maple plank that had been sitting in a neighbor's garage for 40 years. Joseph Graham built the tall chair.

How did you go about commissioning all this kitchen woodworking?

Rausa: It is always a really long thought process on our part. It's not just a matter of what works in the space. First we have to be attracted to the artist, then we have to be attracted to their personality. We want to own works by artists who will feel welcome in our home.

And whose pottery do you use in the kitchen?

Rausa: Our everyday tableware is Marv's garden pattern, and many works on the shelves are by friends who also wood-fire, such as Julie Crosby and Ron Meyers, along with kiln colleagues Fred Herbst and Cary Joseph.

Elsewhere, you also have lots of contemporary pottery around.

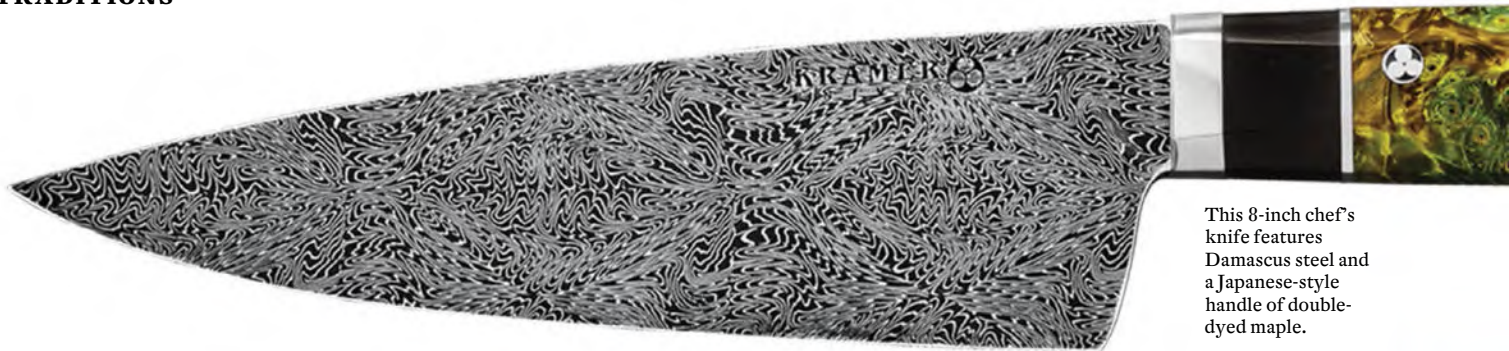
Bjurlin: I've gotten pieces from people whom I've crossed paths with, so there's a story involved with those, too. One of my good friends who also fires at my kiln is Tony Clennell, an Ontario potter. I am also an avid collector of my dear friend Ron Meyers. I love his work for its quirkiness. I told him I need a piece of his polychrome work for my bathroom. I just said it has to have a fish on it. He laughed and said he might have a few.

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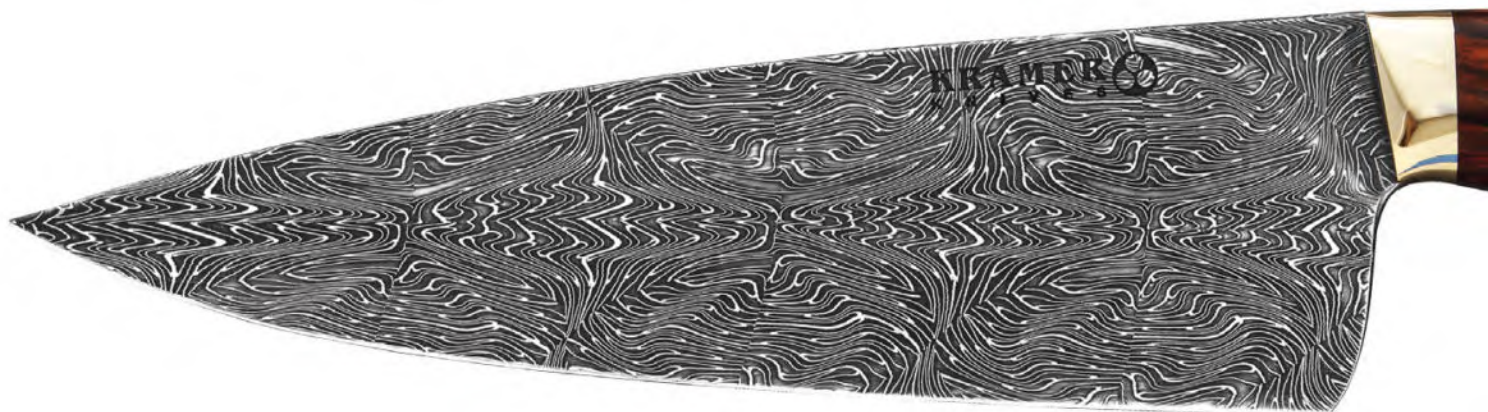
bjurlinceramics.com
craftsalliance.com

Rebecca J. Ritzel is an arts journalist based in Alexandria, Virginia.





This 8-inch chef's knife features Damascus steel and a Japanese-style handle of double-dyed maple.



The Beauty of Use

Step by step, master knifemaker Bob Kramer found his life's work.

STORY BY *Perry A. Price*



At his workshop in Olympia, Washington, Bob Kramer forges high-performance culinary knives. Anthony Bourdain calls them “the finest chef’s knives in the world.”

THE CULINARY KNIVES OF Bob Kramer are among the most difficult to obtain in the United States. For almost a decade, the waiting list for one of his creations was nearly four years; now his knives can be acquired only through occasional auctions, by lottery, or by luck; Kramer pulls names from his email list in an effort to democratize the process.

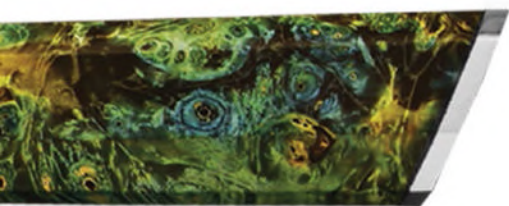
But before he made his celebrated culinary tools, Kramer began by learning to use one.

Born and raised outside of Detroit, Kramer left at 19, roaming around the country before his sister and brother-in-law encouraged him to come to Houston. He landed a job as a waiter at the Houston Country Club in 1978. It was “an old-school country club,” he recalls.

“I had never experienced a place like this before.”

Of all the lessons he learned in that kitchen, the most valuable came from observing the prowess of the career chefs and servers. “I was dyslexic and didn’t realize it at that point, so school was kind of a struggle. This was my first real vision of another way to make a living.” After the country club, Kramer joined the circus for a year, then moved to Seattle, where he attended a local community college, working for a stretch in the kitchen of the Four Seasons Hotel.

There, the tools of his accidental trade caught his attention. “Your knives are going to get dull—that’s just the way it is,” he says. But nobody in the kitchen could adequately explain how to



ABOVE, LEFT (2): Damascus steel, known for its distinctive patterns, is made by a labor-intensive process that can involve hundreds of layers of steel, worked and reworked many times.



BELOW: A carving set auctioned in 2012. Auctions are one of the few ways to buy Bob Kramer's knives.



sharpen or maintain the knives. Kramer was intrigued – and motivated. “People have been sharpening knives for thousands of years,” he thought. “I can do this.”

Establishing himself as a sharpener exposed Kramer to sharpeners from Italy, engineers, and tool-and-die makers, all making a living in a skilled trade. Kramer admired his new associates for their self-reliance and systematic approach. “I felt like this was my fraternity,” he recalls.

It was a short leap from sharpening to making knives himself. In the early 1990s, Kramer noticed an ad for a course offered by the American Bladesmith Society. “I decided right on the spot ‘I’m going to do that,’” he recalls. As one of a dozen students learning to hammer next to piles of coal at

the Bill Moran School of Bladesmithing near Hope, Arkansas, Kramer realized he’d found what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. “I can pound on a piece of steel that is essentially junk, a leaf-spring from a car, and turn it into a really, really good tool. Not only is it a good tool, it’s got this beautiful vibe to it because I made it.”

After the class, with a borrowed anvil and a propane forge in his garage, Kramer found a new rhythm: During the day he sharpened knives for restaurants, in the evenings he waited tables or cooked, and on weekends he forged blades. “As soon as I started making culinary knives, it made sense,” he says. “Here is a knife that really gets used.”

Kramer, who has lived in Olympia, Washington, since

2005, forges culinary knives in both European and Japanese designs. He uses either 52100 grade carbon steel or the more distinctive Damascus steel. Known by the wavy and often intricate patterns revealed after polishing, Damascus steel is made from a combination of two or more kinds of carbon steel with individual but compatible chemical characteristics. “Those [steels] get stacked up into sort of a Dagwood sandwich and forge-welded together,” he explains, until they operate as a single piece. The stacking and forging is repeated many times, creating a piece of steel from hundreds of layers. Carefully controlling the folding of the steel allows Kramer to reveal organic patterns or more distinct geometric shapes. The

result of the intensive process is a blade with expressive character and a sustainable razor edge.

Kramer is one of only 120 or so master smiths recognized by the American Bladesmith Society and the latest recipient of the Rare Craft Fellowship Award presented by the American Craft Council in association with The Balvenie, a maker of single malt scotch. Despite the accolades, Kramer is unequivocal about what he makes: “First and foremost, it’s a tool.” He’s humbled and grateful that someone might look at one of his pieces as art, he says. “But I’m just trying to make a really beautiful tool.”

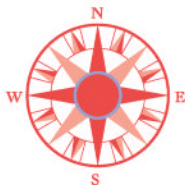
✦ kramerknives.com
Perry A. Price is director of education for the American Craft Council.

Island Enclave: San Juan, Puerto Rico

In this sunny Caribbean city, traditional crafts remain a contemporary practice.

STORY BY

Liz Logan



↑ Old San Juan, Loíza Aldea, and Ponce are among the centers of craft in Puerto Rico.

PUERTO RICO'S MOST ALLURING aspect may be its idyllic beaches, but in the capital of San Juan, the culture is just as rich as the landscape. In the historic district of Old San Juan – characterized by colonial-era buildings in a rainbow of colors, charming cobblestone streets, and imposing seaside fortresses – it quickly becomes clear just how much Puerto Ricans cherish their artistic traditions. Work by Puerto Rican artists, such as paintings by 19th-century master José Campeche, are displayed widely in museums, such as the National Gallery and the

Museum of the Americas. But those institutions also showcase striking examples of craft, including a permanent folk art exhibit at the Museum of the Americas. In Quincentennial Plaza, the towering centerpiece is *El Tótem Telúrico* (*Earth Totem*) by renowned contemporary sculptor Jaime Suárez. In both fine art and craft, the traditions are varied and vibrant.

The richness is in part the result of the many cultural intersections and upheavals in Puerto Rican history. In the early 1500s, the Spaniards colonized Puerto Rico, and for

three centuries, San Juan was the major legislative and military outpost of the Spanish empire in Central America and the Caribbean. The religion and culture the Spanish brought had a huge influence on Puerto Rican life, but there were also African traditions brought over by slaves, and aspects of the indigenous Taíno culture also survived.

“Artists and artisans are our cultural ambassadors,” says Pavlova Mezquida Greber, a museum consultant and former director of the Crafts Development Program, a government initiative that supports artisans.

➤ **OLD SAN JUAN**
San Juan was built in the early 1500s as a Spanish colony. Today it's a destination for fine art and craft, particularly in the Old San Juan neighborhood.





▲ **3MUJERES**

Enid Silvestry, Dafne Elvira, and Yelyn Vivoni run 3Mujeres (“Three Women”), a gallery and boutique in Old San Juan.

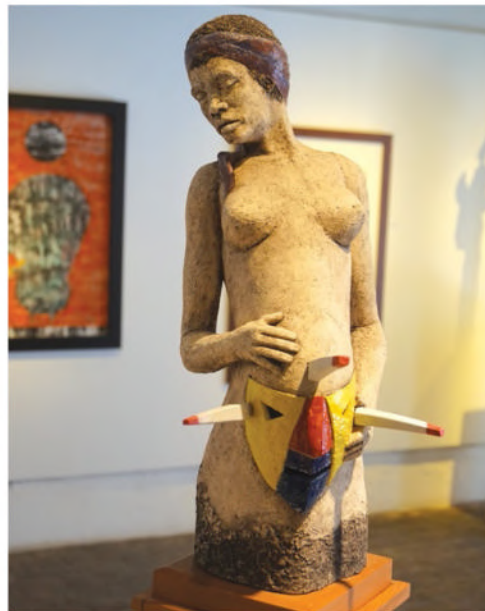
➤ **ENID SILVESTRY**

A textile artist as well as a gallerist, Silvestry portrays the everyday lives of independent women in brightly colored embroidered paintings and drawings on pillows, towels, and other goods.



▲ **JULIO CÉSAR DÍAZ**

Díaz, a sculptor, explores complicated themes of race and identity in his work. *Nacimiento de Vejigante* (Birth of the Vejigante) depicts an African-style mask from Loíza protruding from a pregnant woman’s belly.



Puerto Rican artists have received international prizes and invitations to teach abroad, and many university and government-sponsored programs offer training where artists can learn crafts such as ceramics and woodcarving. There’s also government aid for artisans, which allows many of them to live on their earnings selling their work at fairs, such as the Fiestas de la Calle San Sebastián, a popular carnival held in Old San Juan in January.

Santos – wooden carvings of saints – are the predominant craft items in Puerto Rican stores and craft fairs, and they are widely produced, mostly in the western part of the country. Drawing on Taíno traditions of carved idols, the Spanish missionaries started this tradition in the 16th century so that the inhabitants could have Christian

saints to pray to in their homes. The tradition was passed down through generations, and there are still entire families, such as the Orta family, that are known for their *santos*. Small versions sell for modest prices in shops in Old San Juan, while larger versions can cost as much as \$1,000.

Ornate and frightening papier-mâché *máscaras* (masks) worn by revelers called *vejigantes* at island festivals are another popular craft that can be traced back to the Spanish, but the tradition also melded with African and Taíno mask-making rituals. The southern city of Ponce, which is famous for its pre-Lent carnival, is the epicenter of the mask-making tradition. Near San Juan, the town of Loíza Aldea (commonly known as Loíza), whose residents have largely African roots, is also

renowned for its masks, made of painted halves of coconut shells. Francisco “Panchi” Tirado merges the mask traditions of Ponce and Loíza with his small coconut masks meticulously painted with bright colors and detailed motifs. Instead of the papier-mâché horns and sticks that typically adorn masks from Ponce and Loíza, respectively, his masks feature idiosyncratic branches that he paints.

Other popular crafts are bird carvings – artist Alex Ríos Fernández has been recognized internationally for this genre – musical instruments, ceramics, and jewelry. Some traditional crafts, however, such as woven hammocks and *mundillos*, a product of Spanish bobbin lace-making now practiced only in Puerto Rico and

Spain, are dying out, according to Greber. Mass-produced lace and imported hammocks are much more affordable and maintain a similar level of quality.

Tony Amador Fox, owner of Puerto Rican Art & Crafts, carries work by about 60 artisans and 30 fine artists in his shop, which is a destination for traditional crafts in Old San Juan. He notes that Operation Bootstrap, a post-World War II economic program, brought American influence into the country, kicking off a boom in ceramics and reawakening a tradition that goes back to the Taíno.

The nonprofit Casa Candina nurtured many ceramic artists in the 1980s. The founding artists “had a high aesthetic, and it was a place people could go to develop their own style,”

*Puerto Rican
craft traditions
are varied
and vibrant.*



◀ **FRANCISCO TIRADO**

Known as a prolific maker of ornate papier-mâché masks, Tirado creates and sells hundreds of masks each year for costumed festival revelers called *vejigantes*.

➤ **MIGUEL CARABALLO**

A well-known mask-maker, Caraballo, along with his wife and son, creates masks in Ponce. His work is in the National Museum of American History.

◀ **LOÍZA ALDEA ARTISTS**

Artists from Loíza Aldea, a town near San Juan, use coconut shell halves instead of papier-mâché to create masks, then embellish them with painted sticks. This mask is in the collection of the Museum of the Americas in San Juan.





▲ **ROXANNA JORDÁN**
A ceramist, Jordán uses raku techniques to create soulful figurines and larger wall pieces.



◀ **PATRICIA WILSON**
A Puerto Rican native now living in Miami, Wilson is a textile artist known for her elaborate *carnaval*-inspired portraits, which she creates by sewing sequins and beads onto silk.



▲ **SANTOS**
Santos – wooden carvings of saints – are a tradition dating back to the 16th century. These antique figures are among 10,000 the late artist Ángel Botello collected, and can be seen at Galería Botello, run by Ángel's son, Juan.

A sense of history permeates the work of many Puerto Rican artists.

Greber recalls. The gallery and teaching facility closed in 1992, but the group continues to promote the art form by sponsoring contests and exhibitions.

Julio César Díaz's work combines ceramics and unpainted carved wood, a vehicle to grapple with issues of race in Puerto Rico's history: In *Espíritu del Mangle* (*Spirit of the Mangrove*), leaves formed of wood and clay hide the face of a black man; in *Nacimiento de Vejigante* (*Birth of the Vejigante*), an African-style mask from Loíza protrudes from a pregnant woman's belly. Díaz also loves the history in Old San Juan: *Nostalgia* (*Thinking of You*) features images of the colorful stained glass windows in the area.

Another noted ceramic artist is Roxanna Jordán, who uses raku techniques to create small,

soulful figurines and larger wall pieces, such as *The Book of Love*.

Both Díaz's and Jordán's work are on display at Galería Botello, owned by Juan Botello, the son of renowned painter Ángel Botello. The gallery also features a collection of antique santos.

Not far from Botello is 3Mujeres (which translates as "three women"), a gallery and boutique opened a few years ago by Yelyn Vivoni, a ceramic artist, Enid Silvestry, a textile artist, and Dafne Elvira, a painter. Vivoni's pieces often feature organic shapes, some suspended with wire. She spent decades developing her reputation through interior design commissions and selling her work at craft fairs and museum shops. "You have to put your whole heart into your craft if you want to make a living," she

says. Since so much of the economy relies on tourism, the three artists offer small items – hand-painted purses, printed pillows, ceramic bowls – in addition to their large-scale works. They've been pleasantly surprised, though, that the large, pricey pieces often sell, and they have many repeat customers.

Silvestry draws and paints brightly colored figures on fabric, then outlines them with running stitches and embroidered text. She's inspired by music, dance, spirituality, and street scenes in Old San Juan. The messages in her pieces are meant to reflect the lives of women, such as "*Estamos hechos para ser amadas, no para ser comprendidas*" ("We are made to be loved, not understood").

She learned how to sew as a child. "My mother said

needle and thread were the only thing that would focus my energy," she recalls.

Patricia Wilson, a Puerto Rican native who now lives in Miami, also works in textiles; her *carnaval*-inspired "paintings," available at Galería Botello, are made by sewing thousands of sequins and beads onto silk. She was inspired by her mother's dress-making skills, as well as the *labor de mujer*, piecework that Puerto Rican women did for the garment industry in New York City and on the island. As in the work of so many Puerto Rican artists, history is always present.

✦ *Liz Logan is a Brooklyn freelance writer whose work has appeared in the New York Times and other publications.*



QUINCENTENNIAL PLAZA

This plaza, which boasts San Juan's highest point – not to mention an enviable view of the Atlantic – is also home to Jaime Suárez's sculpture *El Tótem Telúrico* (*Earth Totem*). The 40-foot sculpture was built in 1992 to mark the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Europeans in the New World.

Taking Skill Down a Peg

A new book explores the power of ‘sloppy craft.’

INTERVIEW WITH *Elaine Cheasley Paterson* AND *Susan Surette* BY *Liz Logan*

FINESSE. VIRTUOSITY. POLISH. Some craft artists are deliberately flouting these ideals. Before you gasp, consider that this might be a good thing. That’s what Elaine Cheasley Paterson and Susan Surette suggest as editors of a new book, *Sloppy Craft: Postdisciplinarity and the Crafts* (Bloomsbury Academic). The book gathers a dozen essays from craft scholars and educators, who write about the “sloppy craft” aesthetic and the power that artists have discovered in it. Coined in 2007 by artist and educator Anne Wilson, the term refers to an approach that emphasizes concept over advanced skill, and process over refined product, calling into question revered traditional principles of craft.

We talked with Surette and Paterson about the possibilities of this unorthodox approach.

How do you define sloppy craft, and when did the aesthetic emerge?

Susan Surette: Sloppy craft is work that appears as if it lacks skill, but it has conceptual content. Sloppy craft is about disruption. It’s meant to challenge ways of thinking. It can be a critique of economic structures, social structures, gender structures. And it can be about community building.

Elaine Cheasley Paterson: An interest in sloppy craft often implies the rejection of the technical virtuosity or polished finish of a lot of traditional craft practices. The lines are blurring between fine art and craft, as they have been for many years. There’s more and more

interdisciplinarity in the arts, and contemporary artists are contracting with artisans to bring in craft practices that they don’t normally work in; or they might take up these craft practices themselves, and the results might appear sloppy. At the same time, the craft world is becoming more avant-garde and welcoming experimentation. There are many craftspeople who are very skilled, yet have the ability to work sloppily – on purpose, as a way of communicating. Some work sloppily because they understand the histories of craft, intercultural histories, gender relations, labor relations, and other issues, and sloppiness is a way for them to work out their ideas about materials and processes.

Surette: Sloppy craft also works both ways, in the art and craft worlds. You see craftspeople using painting or sculptural languages in ways that might be considered sloppy by sculptors or painters. Sloppy has been on the radar for more than a century, since the onset of the arts and crafts movement, and maybe even before then. But it’s been popping up more and more in recent years, in conceptual art and conceptual craft practices, as well in DIY communities.

What are the possibilities of sloppy craft? Why do artists choose this approach?

Paterson: There are really interesting and diverse reasons why artists use this approach. Some of the concepts that sloppy craft has been used to address are: gender; ideas about skill, including how it

relates to domestic life; labor, including controlled production, handwork, the apprenticeship system, and the amateur in relation to the professional; time; process; and performance.

Surette: Another reason that artists might adopt a sloppy approach is that it helps them break away from tightly skilled work and bring in a playfulness, an openness, creativity, and innovation.



Courtesy of the artist and Lisa Cooley, New York

Josh Faught's *Triage* (2009) explores queer identity with unrefined materials such as toilet paper, self-help books, gay-pride buttons, nail polish, and yarn. Paterson and Surette call Faught the "original sloppy crafter."



Paterson: Trying to work sloppily on purpose can be a welcome challenge for artists. It's very hard to make your body not do the fine work that it's capable of doing and that you've been trained to do for so long.

Can you share a few examples of artists using a sloppy craft approach?

Paterson: We refer to Josh Faught as "the original sloppy

A sloppy approach allows artists to break free from highly technical work and makes room for playfulness.

crafters,” because Anne Wilson coined “sloppy craft” in response to his work. He works with fiber and employs many craft techniques, but his style resembles amateur making rather than fine craft.

Laurent Craste, whose work is featured on the cover of the book, is a highly skilled ceramist and makes exquisite objects, along the lines of Sèvres porcelain. At a certain point, he slams a crowbar or some other tool into his pieces and alters them completely. The instruments he uses are representative of industrial labor and manufacturing tools, as opposed to highly skilled porcelain making. So he’s breaking apart his initial skilled work and bringing in other notions of skill, through sloppiness.

Kent Monkman is a Canadian artist of Cree ancestry who works in a variety of mediums. In some pieces, he mashes up craft traditions and unexpected objects, as in *Beaded Moccasins* (2007), where he uses beadwork on a pair of strappy red platform sandals. Scholar Elizabeth Kalbfleisch addresses Monkman’s work within the context of prized practices in aboriginal art, such as basketry, weaving, blackware pottery, and fine beadwork. She looks



Laurent Craste makes objects, such as fine porcelain vases, that require a high level of technical skill and also symbolize their owners’ wealth and power. Then he violently alters them or places them in a disturbing setting, as with *La fin d’une potiche I*, where a drooping vase appears to have hastened its own demise.

Sloppiness is a shortcut in this context. The challenge to educators, then, is to go beyond this go-to sloppiness and allow students to develop skills.

What’s the future of sloppy craft? How does skilled craftsmanship fit into the picture?

Paterson: The reverence for careful craftsmanship hasn’t disappeared, and sloppy craft and fine craft don’t preclude each other. Sloppy craft maybe draws attention to careful craftsmanship by virtue of its omission. We’ve simply shifted gears, and there are different ways of thinking. The key is to enjoy the innovations and improvisations that go along with sloppy craft practices and integrate these into a larger language of craft, while still appreciating a skillfully made object.

Surette: There is real personal power that comes from skillful work, and many people recognize the value of human labor, the energy that’s put into making, and the acquiring of knowledge that’s part of skillful work. That doesn’t go out of style.

✦ *Liz Logan is a Brooklyn freelance writer whose work has appeared in the New York Times and other publications.*

at the culturally contingent view of craft and what the stakes are for someone working within those traditions. The difference between “skill” and “sloppy” is socially determined. Monkman is rejecting the boundaries, perhaps.

Surette: Maryhill Burgh Halls, in Glasgow, Scotland, a historic building that was renovated with input from the local community, is an example of how sloppy craft can be about building community. Folks from the town participated in workshops on everything from stained glass to stonemasonry, and some of their work was featured in the new building. The focus was on the process and the community rather than the finished product.

Can sloppy craft be taught? Is it a matter of stressing concept

and playing down material skills?

Surette: It’s more complex than just stressing concept and de-emphasizing material skills. The relationship between skill and concept is different for each maker, and it’s determined by their personal needs and what they want to say. But concept is often emphasized over material skill at universities, which are in many cases downgrading or eliminating their skilled, material-based programs, such as textiles and ceramics. As a result, makers often aren’t learning skills; instead, they contract out for that work.

So students gravitate toward sloppy craft because they don’t have the skills to do what they want to do, they don’t have the time, or the education system doesn’t allow them to develop the highly refined skills.

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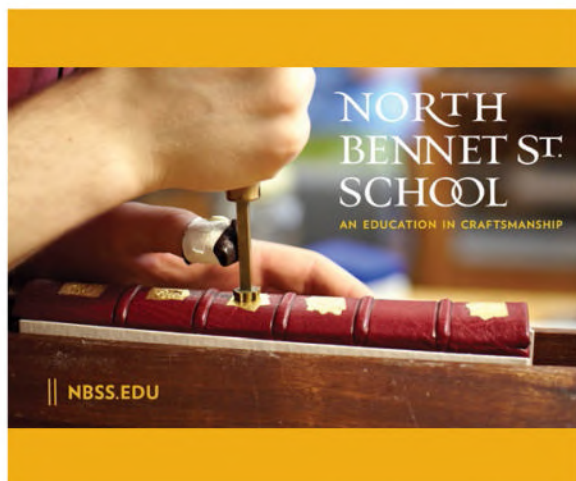


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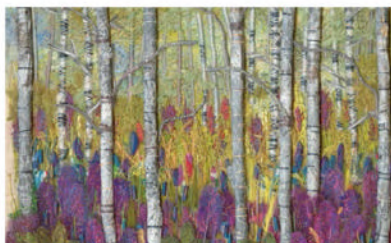
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The Reinvention Issue



Ethan Stern
chooses his own track

Maren Kloppmann's
functional sabbatical

Inside the RISD mansion

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The American Craft Council is a national, nonprofit public educational organization that traces its inception to 1941. Founded by Aileen Osborn Webb, the mission of the Council is to champion and promote the understanding and appreciation of contemporary American craft. Programs include the bimonthly magazine *American Craft*, annual juried shows presenting artists and their work, the American Craft Council Awards honoring excellence, a specialized library, conferences, workshops, and seminars.

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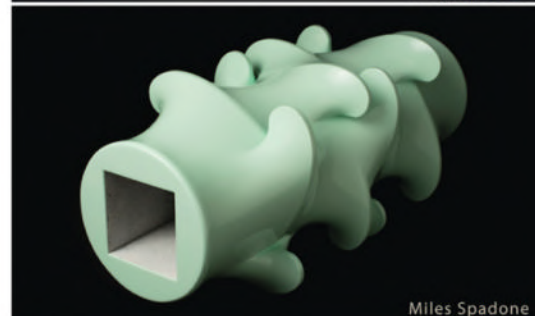
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— Molly and Miles Spadone, sister and brother,
received assistance after their studio flooded

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Anton Alvarez
The Thread
Wrapping Machine
Chair 090415, 2015,
 polyester thread,
 fabric, fake fur, poly-
 vinyl acetate glue,
 color pigment, MDF,
 plywood, oriented
 strand board, wood,
 plastic, metal,
 37 x 16.5 x 21.5 in.



Beginner and Master

AS AN OBJECT, THIS CHAIR BY Anton Alvarez is interesting to look at – but it becomes pure marvel once you learn how it’s made. If you unwrapped it, you’d be left with an assortment of textiles, metal, plastic, and wood, next to a pile of more than 7 miles of thread. No nails. No screws. No dovetail joints.

The Thread Wrapping Machine Chair 090415, as its name suggests, is one of many – part of an evolving series the Swedish-Chilean artist has been developing since his 2012

graduation from London’s Royal College of Art. He invented his thread-wrapping machine, calling on his background in cabinetmaking, graffiti, and design, during his MFA studies.

Imagine two parallel wooden rings equipped with several bobbins of thread and reservoirs of glue and dye. While one of the rings rotates clockwise, the other counters. Whatever passes through the rings is promptly covered and bound with multicolored thread, glue, and pigment.

“Maybe very bravely, but I claim it to be my own craft that never existed before this machine,” he says. “I was a beginner and still the master in some way.”

In April, his first US exhibition, “Wrapsody,” turned New York’s Salon 94 gallery into a workshop where he created, then showcased several new creations, including *090415*. It’s now on display at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, until January 10 as part of “Crafted: Objects in Flux.”

Looking forward, Alvarez is taking the concept further and has built a larger thread-wrapping machine capable of building pieces that fill entire rooms and tower over viewers – Thread Wrapping Architecture, as he refers to the new work. More uncharted territory.

“This is the way I’ve been working with this project. Trying to add, and maybe surprise myself in some way,” he explains. And trying not to anticipate “how the outcome will look.”

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The Rare Vision Art
Galerie. High Fired
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x 20" deep.

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